

# Leading Children's Services: Future Building for Children and Young People

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**By**

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# Abstract

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Leading Children's Services means leading change, but what happens when that change becomes more and more complex? The research is a case study of one local authority and the leadership of complex change with a focus on Children's Services. It has as its focus the leadership of children's services within one local authority and within that explores three particular areas of change: that of reducing budgets, the Academisation of schools and the systems change for child protection services.

Implications for academic debate include the differences between the public and private sectors in terms of the political nature of local government; high levels of regulation and inspection; the relationship between employed staff and elected members; and the relationship with staff and that of trade union engagement.

Although local government can draw from the private sector regarding leadership, the public sector has particular differences and this should be reflected in the approaches taken by senior leaders. The findings build on the coherence making described by Fullan (2001). Whereas Fullan described coherence making as a way of discerning patterns, the case study explored coherence making as making

sense of policy and legislation in order to explain it and make links between them.

It emphasizes the balancing role that senior leaders have to undertake.

The study evidenced the move from the traditional 'command and control' of bureaucratic leadership to that of distributed leadership as well as the development and utilization of shared leadership within the partnership arena. Leaders moved between transactional and transformational roles as the change process demanded. Implications for practice also included systems thinking; dealing with the barriers to change and putting 'team' into the senior leadership team.

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## List of Abbreviations

ABG	Area Based Grant
ADCS	Association of Directors of Children's Services
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
APA	Annual Performance Assessment
BELMAS	British Education Leadership, Management and Administration Society
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CFCI	Child and Family Courts Inspectorate
CIN	Children In Need
CRC	Children's Rights Commissioner
CRTC	Community Right To Challenge
CSA	Children's Services Authority
CSCI	Children's Social Care Inspectorate
DCS	Director of Children's Services
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
FOI	Freedom of Information
HSI	Health Services Inspectorate
JAR	Joint Area Review
LAC	Looked After Children

LEA	Local Education Authority
LM	Lead Member
LMS	Local Management of Schools
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
SCR	Serious Case Review
SSA	Social Services Authority
YOI	Youth Offending Inspectorate

# 1

## Introduction

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### 1.1 Purpose

As I progressed into leadership positions within local authorities I began to search out literature which I hoped would enable me to reflect on the skills I was using and how I could improve upon them. What I found was that a great deal had been written about leadership and management over the past few decades. It is an area of much discussion but the literature I found was focused on the private sector. Consultants such as Robbins (1992); Whyte (2002); Hesselbein, et al., (1996); Collins (2001); Drennan (1992); Heifetz (1994: 2002) Heifetz, et al.,(2009) had worked with a range of businesses over periods of time and then used that knowledge to produce literature on leadership. Bass and Riggio (2006) and Burns (2003) as academics also focus on the private sector. The work of Fullan (2001: 2008: 2011a: 2011b: 2013) is based on educational research evaluation of national programmes in schools. Whilst Brookes and Grint (2010) review leadership in the

public sector, their work is focused on the civil service at national government level and not on local government; they still reflect the private sector history of leadership. Furthermore the transfer of private sector leadership analysis to what is viewed as the public sector arena has not explored the difference in organisation. The public sector is impacted upon by legislation, national government policy and indeed local political policy and leadership, where leadership, policy and direction can change on a four or five year basis through the application of the democratic processes of national and local elections.

This led me to want to explore leadership development and application within the local public sector, with the recognition that the literature would be drawn mainly from private sector research as discussed above. I also wanted to explore the leadership of change specifically, recognising that there was what is termed as 'step change' inherent in children's services. This refers to differences being made in process and practice which results in a more linear change than perhaps a transformational change programme would. My main focus of interest is the leadership of children's services. However, within the current climate of fiscal reductions in respect of the public sector, specifically in local authorities, that step

change was in turn being impacted upon by greater modification programmes which I explore further below. The requirement for change was beginning to feel rather frantic, and with its depth and speed and could easily become chaotic.

Furthermore, leadership in the public sector must find ways of working which does not lead to chaos within changing times. Leaders here are primarily public servants responding to the 'will of the people' when different political parties are voted into power at any given time. They are also responsible for ensuring the continuity of service delivery alongside continuous improvement, to meet the needs of local communities. At the same time public leadership needs to respond to, and incorporate alterations in, policy and direction, both locally and nationally. Some of these changes can reflect extreme differences with greater impacts on how services can and should be delivered, than others.

This study explores how public leadership within a local authority manages and balances out the greater or lesser impact of political metamorphoses and has as its focus the leadership of Children's Services. The following section introduces the



development of Children's Services as a precursor to a wider exploration of leadership within chapter two, the literature review.

## **1.2 The Context of the Research**

This section reflects on the policy and background to the legislative changes which brought about Children's Services both within the local authority setting and its wider partnership arrangements. Through discussion of the component parts it describes the legislative foundations, statutory guidance and expectations which explain the context of the systems and functions for developing integrated working with children, young people and their families at the heart of service delivery.

It establishes the expectations of the legislation, including policy and guidance concerning the setting up of the Children's Trust arrangements following the Children Act (HM Government, 2004). The legislation sets in place the Children's Service Authority (CSA) for higher level councils. Higher level councils are those that have responsibility for Education and Social Services; these were generally County Councils. Metropolitan Councils also held these responsibilities, and when Unitary Authorities were introduced by the Conservative Government from

1994 onwards, a policy continued by the Labour Government from 1997, responsibility for Education and Social Services transferred to them as well. The Children Act (HM Government, 2004) brought together the duties of the Local Education Authority (LEA) and the Social Services Authority (SSA) in relation to children's social care.

The analysis then progresses to more recent policy, guidance and legislation put into place by the Coalition Government since its election in May 2010.

Comparisons are made between the differences within the newer legislation, policy and guidance in order to ascertain the extent of change expected of the Children's Services Authority and its various partners.

### **1.2.1. The Birth of Children's Trusts Arrangements**

Victoria Climbié was born on 2 November 1991 on the Ivory Coast. When she was seven years old, her aunt Marie-Thérèse Kouao took her, through a private fostering arrangement with her parents, to Paris. Her parents felt that this would give her the opportunity for a better life than the one she was likely to have in her home country. However, Victoria was murdered through torture and abuse at the hands of Marie-

Thérèse and her boyfriend, Carl Manning. On her death on 25 February 2000, there followed a public outcry led by the media, which personified the collective societal guilt that this type of crime was not prevented.

In the press this was not solely aimed at the perpetrators of this crime, but more at the perceived lack of action to prevent these types of tragedies by the public authorities who were responsible for child protection. As details emerged during the trial for murder there followed what can be described as a frenzy of public outcry at the missed opportunities the authorities had to prevent Victoria's death (Dickson, 2003).

After the convictions were secured, on 28 June 2003, a public inquiry was held (Dickson, 2003). The Counsel to the hearing, Neil Garnham QC (Garnham, 2003) cited twelve separate occasions when the authorities concerned had a chance to intervene. Each missed intervention offered an opportunity to save Victoria's life. The twelve separate occasions referred to by the QC are reproduced in appendix one.

The public inquiry was fraught with claim and counterclaim by the different services and professionals involved in the Victoria Climbié case since her aunt first brought her to London from Paris. News stories at the time called for someone to be blamed for the failure of services to save this little girl's life. The inexperienced case worker was sacked and told she must never work with children again. From the evidence received from each agency it would appear that there was not only denial of failure but a stepping back of each agency involved, in order that public blame could not be attached to them (Dickson, 2003)).

Such was the heat generated through the media that the Government of the day asked Lord Laming, a former Ofsted Inspector, to undertake a full inquiry, which was published in January 2003 after a year of research (Laming, 2003). One hundred recommendations were made in relation to changes in child care: forty six to be implemented within three months of the report being published, thirty three to be implemented within six months and the remainder within two years. The key recommendations which were adopted by the Government of the time are contained within appendix two.

These recommendations were partially addressed in the Green Paper entitled 'Every Child Matters' published in September 2002 by the Labour Government of the time (HM Government, 2002). At the time of its release, the Green Paper and its sentiments were endorsed and fully supported by all parties, both those in power and those in opposition. This was referred to as 'cross-party support'.

### 1.2.2 Every Child Matters

In response to Lord Laming's report Margaret Hodge, Minister for Children and Families, at the then DCSF launched her report 'Every Child Matters: the next steps', after wide consultation on the Green Paper, published in September 2003 (HM Government, 2003) and outlining major systemic change to Education and Children's Social Care. The report set out the basis for the Children Bill, which became the Children Act (HM Government, 2004). The vision was for every child to be able to reach their potential with no child falling through the net.

To achieve this, the Children Act placed a duty on every agency to work together to deliver common outcomes. It created an expectation for partnership working

through placing a duty to cooperate on various agencies, and involved all partners including the voluntary and community sector. It also required the setting up of Local Safeguarding Boards and placed a duty on all agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (HM Government, 2006b).

However, the *duty* to cooperate was not placed on schools, leaving the legal authority for schools to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This enabled the cooperation of schools within the Local Safeguarding Board arrangements but not the Children's Trust arrangements. This caused difficulties in some local authorities in which schools were not engaged in the work of the Children's Trust in covering the development of early intervention and prevention work, where schools would be seen as among the 'universal deliverers' of services to children and young people. Representation from the newly formed Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) persuaded government to insert this duty into the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act of 2009 (HM Government 2010a) which also transferred commissioning responsibilities for post-16 education to the Local Authority from the then Local Learning and Skills Council and made the Children's Trust Board a statutory body.

The 'Every Child Matters' paper set out five major outcomes for local authorities to achieve: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being. Schools were expected to deliver these outcomes under the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, and they became integral to the inspection of schools. Whether the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as statutory guidance for schools, alongside a clear inspection regime, would have been sufficient to bring all schools into the Children's Trust arrangements remains unknown at this time; certainly the Association of Directors of Children's Services felt that the broadness of the 2004 legislation allowed some schools to remove themselves from the partnership arena and remain independent in their delivery from all other agencies, where certainly the spirit of the law demanded cooperation and working together at all levels.

These outcomes also formed the basis of HMI Inspections through Joint Area Reviews (JAR) of Children's Services Local Authorities undertaken jointly by Ofsted, the Commission for Services to Children Inspectorate (CSCI) and the Health Service Inspectorate (HSI). These were planned on a four year cycle of inspections

to cover all local authorities. In 2007 the JAR cycle of inspections ceased and the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) for every local authority was introduced through legislation by the Education and Inspection Act (2006a). (HM Government, 2006b). The legislation also combined several inspection agencies, that of Ofsted, Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), Youth Offending Inspectorate (YOI), Child Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) and the Child and Family Courts Inspectorate (CFCI). The Coalition Government signalled its intention to repeal that part of the Act in relation to APAs in 2010 (the schools' duty to cooperate), as well as the statutory nature of Children's Trusts; however this did not take place until the Academy Act (HM Government 2010b) with the final annual review taking place in 2011. The duty to cooperate was removed from schools, reflecting a government ethos of schools independent of local authorities. However, the legal requirement and the statutory duty for a Children's Trust were not included in this legislation and still remain in place at the time of writing.

Five main guidance documents were issued by the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to support provisions made in the Children Act (2004), which underpin 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' (HM Government 2003).



These were seen as the key documents of guidance to implement the Children Act (2004) and were required reading alongside other key policy and planning areas relating to 'Every Child Matters' and reference made to a further five examples (see table 1.1 below). The five main guidance documents include the creation of duties on local agencies in relation to children's and young people's welfare and well-being (HM Government, 2006b).

**Figure 1. 1: Guidance Documents**

Guidance	Description
<i>Inter-Agency Co-operation to Improve Wellbeing of Children: Children's Trust</i>	Duties placed on local authorities and other key partners to co-operate in order to improve the wellbeing of children and young people: provides a strategic framework within which all children's services should operate. Children's Trusts became statutory bodies in the 2010 Act.
<i>The Duty to Make arrangements to</i>	Key arrangements for local authorities

<p><i>Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children</i></p>	<p>to put in place with other agencies in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Statutory guidance to form Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) in each local authority reporting into the Children's Trust arrangements. These arrangements replaced the Area Child Protection Committees operating within each local area through their Social Services departments.</p>
<p><i>The Children and Young People's Plan</i></p>	<p>Regulations requiring local authorities to work with partners to produce a strategic plan setting out how they would meet the five outcomes within 'Every Child Matters'. The Plan was to be developed for the Children's Trust, led by the local authority. It became a</p>

	<p>statutory duty to produce the three year plan, reviewed and updated annually in the 2010 Act. The 2010 Act also shifted the responsibility for developing the plan onto the Children's Trust Board.</p>
<p><i>The Role and Responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services</i></p>	<p>Denoting the governance, leadership and structures required within the new strategic framework</p>
<p><i>'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.</i></p>	<p>The chapter on Local Safeguarding Children's Boards. These arrangements were strengthened and the guidance re-issued in 2008.</p> <p>Furthermore, when the case of Baby 'P' emerged in 2009, again in Haringey, the public outcry at yet another perceived preventable death, caused</p>

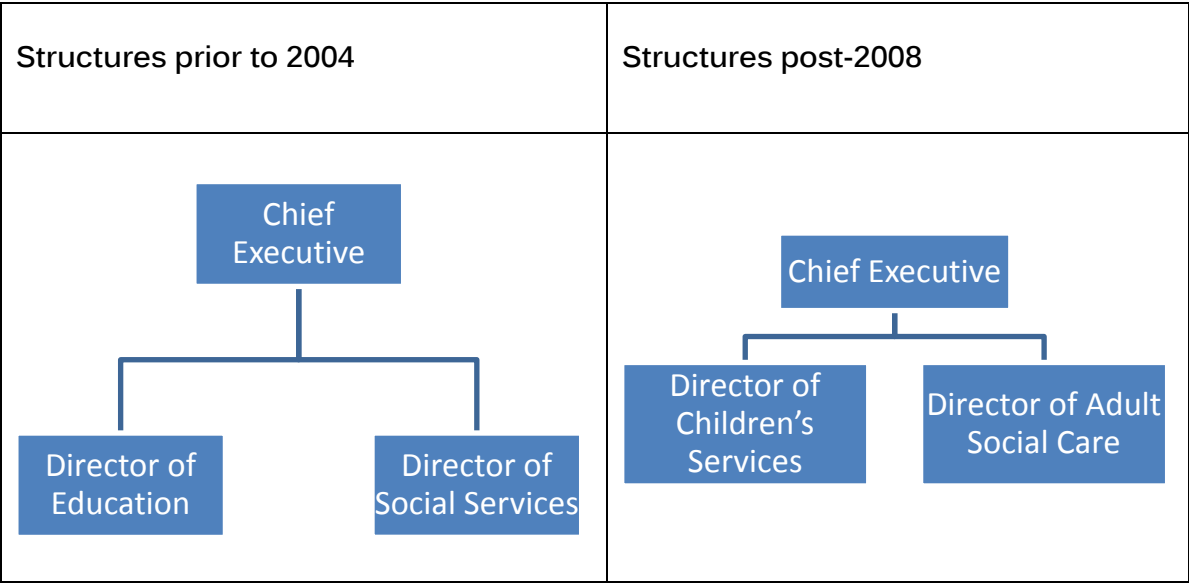
	<p>the Secretary of State for Children's Services – the Rt. Hon. Ed Balls,- to require the sacking of the relevant Director of Children's Services together with the requirement for each Safeguarding Children Board to have an independent Chair appointed.</p>
<p><i>Other policy and guidance to be taken account of:</i></p>	
<p><i>The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services</i></p>	<p>A ten year programme to stimulate long-term and sustained improvement in children's health and wellbeing.</p>
<p><i>The Framework for the Inspection of Children's Services</i></p>	<p>Sets out the principles to be applied by an inspectorate or commission assessing any children's service, and defines the key judgements which, where appropriate and practical,</p>

	inspections will seek to make.
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Source: HM Government (2006b) pp.23/24

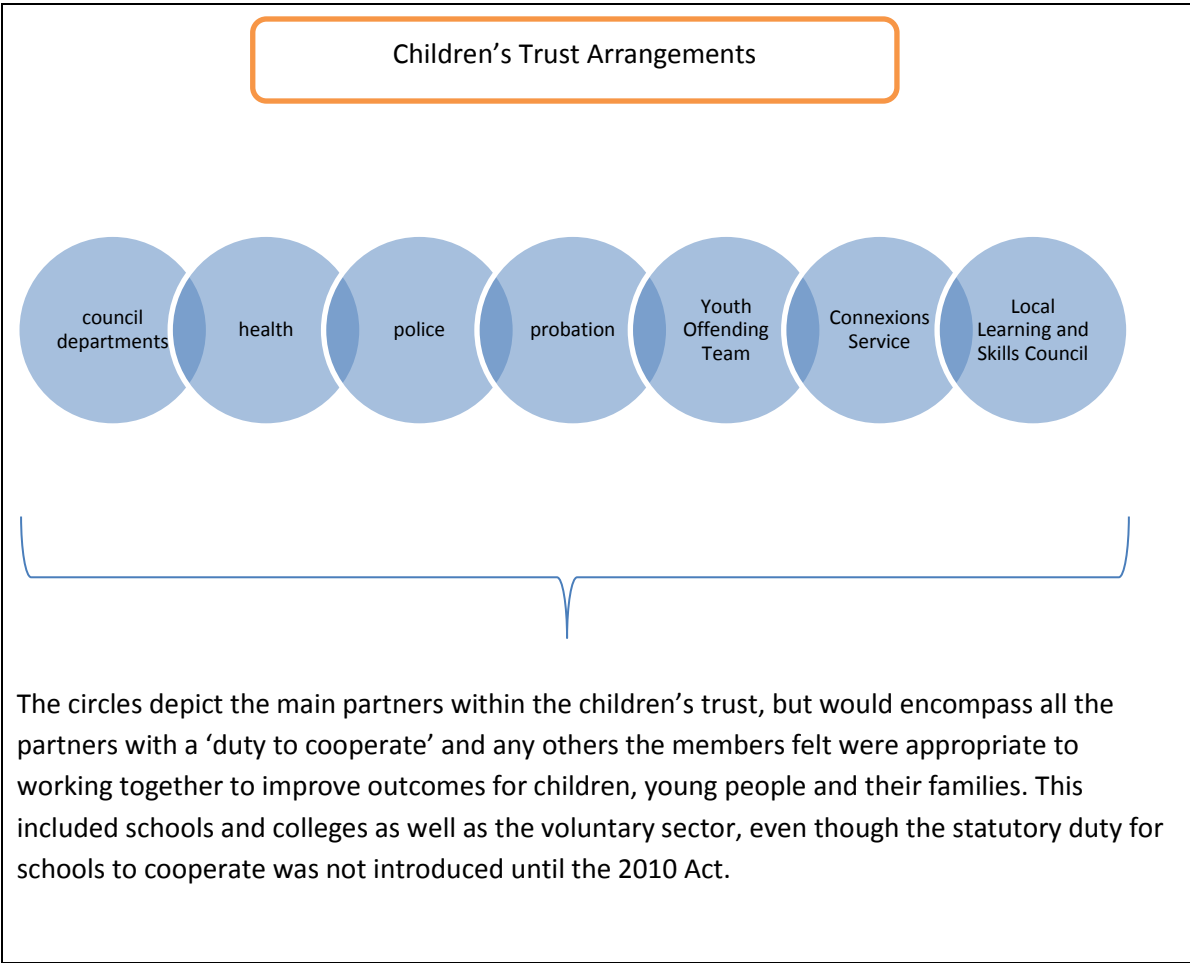
The Children Act (HM Government, 2004) legislation led to organisational change within every higher level council, removing the title of Local Education Authority (LEA) and replacing this with the title of Children's Services Authority (CSA). So councils which had the responsibility of delivering education services, and through them support and intervention for schools, merged this department with the children's section of Social Services. Education authorities as newly formed children's services authorities now introduced new structures to facilitate this, appointing Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for the same. These were expected to be put into place by 2008. See figure 1.2 below:

Figure 1. 2: Outline Structural Changes as Demanded by Legislation in the Children's Act 2004



However, this organisational change also led to the setting up of a wider organisation developed and delivered through and with those agencies which now had a 'duty to cooperate', referred to as the Children's Trust which was a statutory body from 2010. See figure 1.3 below which depicts the range of partners involved in the wider delivery of children's services in order to achieve the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes.

Figure 1. 3: Children's Trust Arrangements.



The partnership arrangements led to the formation of a Board for decision making purposes. In most local authorities this was chaired by either the Lead Member or the Director for Children's Services, and less often through an appointed independent chair or a chair elected through the membership. In this research study the Board is chaired by the Lead Member with close support from the Director of Children's Services.

The work of the Board ultimately reports to the appropriate District Community Partnership, as one of its theme groups. Having said that, as the Partnership at all levels was made up from a group of independent organisations and agencies there is a need to explore whether the work is that of an organisation *per se* or whether it is a completely different phenomenon. This research is focused on Children's Services, whilst there is recognition that it has close links to and is an integral part of the wider community partnership the analysis of its organisation and the Children's Trust as an organisation, led by the Children's Services Authority remains the focus here.

However, since the inception of the Coalition Government in 2010, there have been several changes to various aspects of this guidance, denoted in red italics, see Figure 1.4 below.



Figure 1. 4: Guidance Documents with Updates

Guidance	Description
<p><i>Inter-Agency Co-operation to Improve Wellbeing of Children: Children's Trust</i></p>	<p>Duties placed on local authorities and other key partners to co-operate in order to improve the wellbeing of children and young people; provides a strategic framework within which all children's services should operate.</p> <p>Children's Trusts became statutory bodies in the 2010 Act.</p> <p><i>The requirement for a children's trust board was verbally revoked by the Secretary of State in 2010, however the legislation to achieve this has never been put onto statute.</i></p> <p><i>The duty to cooperate placed on</i></p>

	<p><i>schools in the 2010 Act was removed by the current government in the Academy Act 2010 (HM Government, 2010). However in the local authority which is the subject of this case study, the partners in the Children's Trust, including schools, re-pledged their commitment to working together in the interests of all children, young people and families in the local authority area.</i></p>
<p><i>The Duty to Make arrangements to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children</i></p>	<p>Key arrangements for local authorities to put in place with other agencies in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Statutory guidance to form Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) in each local authority reporting into the</p>

	<p>Children's Trust arrangements. These arrangements replaced the Area Child Protection Committees operating within each local area through their Social Services departments.</p> <p><i>The 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' statutory guidance was re-written in 2012 and much of the content removed. All references to the Children's Trust arrangements have been removed and the emphasis is on Local Safeguarding Children Boards; however the local authority being studied in this report made a clear decision to retain and use the original guidance due to its clarity of purpose and detail for implementation, citing the reason as above.</i></p>
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<p><i>The Children and Young People's Plan</i></p>	<p>Regulations requiring local authorities to work with partners to produce a strategic plan setting out how they would meet the five outcomes within 'Every Child Matters'. The Plan was to be developed for the Children's Trust, led by the local authority. It became a statutory duty to produce the three year plan, reviewed and updated annually in the 2010 Act. The 2010 Act also shifted the responsibility for developing the plan onto the Children's Trust Board.</p> <p><i>The expectation to produce a three year plan was removed by the new Government in 2010 and is not now part of the inspection regime undertaken by Ofsted. However, the</i></p>
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	<p><i>Children's Trust Board in our case study decided to retain the Children and Young People's Plan as a coherent document which enabled clear prioritisation to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.</i></p>
<p><i>The Role and Responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services</i></p>	<p>Denoting the governance, leadership and structures required within the new strategic framework.</p> <p><i>These have been revised and re-issued with the intention to undertake an annual review. The revised guidance is less detailed and less prescriptive although the principles within the Children Act (2004) remain in place.</i></p>

<p><i>'Working Together to Safeguard Children'</i></p>	<p>The chapter on Local Safeguarding Children's Board. These arrangements were strengthened and the guidance re-issued in 2008.</p> <p>Furthermore, when the case of Baby 'P' emerged in 2009, again in Haringey, the public outcry at yet another perceived preventable death, caused the Secretary of State for Children's Services – the Rt. Hon. Ed Balls - to require the sacking of the relevant Director of Children's Services together with the requirement for each Safeguarding Children Board to have an independent Chair appointed.</p> <p><i>An Independent Chair was appointed to the Local Safeguarding Board in the case study area.</i></p>
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<p><i>Other policy and guidance to be taken account of:</i></p>	
<p><i>The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services</i></p>	<p>A ten year programme to stimulate long-term and sustained improvement in children's health and wellbeing.</p> <p><i>This has been superseded through the Health Act of 2012, and changes, at the time of writing, are now in progress to remove Primary Care Trusts, moving the responsibility for Public Health to Local Authorities and setting up a Health and Well-being Board in each area. There is a shadow Health and Well-being Board in place in the case study local authority, with the decision taken at the time of writing that all areas of children's health will</i></p>

	<i>be led by the Children's Trust.</i>
<i>The Framework for the Inspection of Children's Services</i>	<p>Sets out the principles to be applied by an inspectorate or commission assessing any children's service, and defines the key judgements which, where appropriate and practical, inspections will seek to make.</p> <p><i>The Joint Area Reviews remains in statute however the requirement for Annual Performance Assessments has been removed from statute, with no replacement plan for inspections covering the totality of children's services. Inspection is now on safeguarding children with no inspection of the educational aspects of children's services except for that of looked after children. However,</i></p>



	<p><i>following three years with no local authority education inspection, pilots are now being developed, at the time of writing, in respect of local authorities support to schools.</i></p>
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Source: HM Government (2006b) pp.23/24 *Author's annotations in red italics.*

In summary, upon election in 2010 the new coalition government appeared to be against the Children's Trust arrangements, as evidenced by early declarations by the Secretary of State for Education that he would be rescinding the legislation for all Children's Services Authorities to have a Children's Trust as a statutory duty (Gove, 2010). He focused instead on education in respect of developing and promoting free schools and Academies: indeed the legislation in respect of the Academy Act (HM Government, 2010b) was the quickest ever legislation in terms of time taken through parliament to move from a Bill to an Act (Eversheds, 7 July 2010). The duty to co-operate placed on schools in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (HM Government, 2009) was removed in the Academy Act (HM Government, 2010b) alongside the requirement for annual performance

assessments for local authorities, however, the statutory duty for a Children's Trust was not removed, nor was the the requirement to produce a Children's Plan on an annual basis. However, a number of local authority areas have relaxed their emphasis on a Children's Trust arrangement and have stopped refreshing their Children and Young People's Plan. This view has been reinforced through the publication of new guidance in April 2013, which relates only to those duties required of a local authority to have a Local Safeguarding Board, and is silent on the requirement to have Children's Trust arrangements in place (HM Government , 2013).

The local authority which is the subject of the case study discussed the comments made by the Secretary of State for Education (Gove, 2010) at the time of the announcement and formally decided to re-commit to the arrangements which were in place. They continued with the work of the Children's Trust as though the statutory duty was still in place, as well as continuing with the provisions of the Children's Plan (Children's Trust Board, 2010) and its refreshment.

Similarly the revision, and indeed the gross reduction, of statutory guidance on matters related to the working of the Trust have been put to one side, and the Children's Trust in the authority subject to the research continues to meet the original guidance treating that as good practice. Checks and balances have been put into place to ensure that through either the work of the Children's Trust Board or the Local Safeguarding Children Board, all statutory guidance is being met.

### **1.2.3 Safeguarding Children and Young People**

The legislation from the Children Act 2004 also required the formation of a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in each Children's Services Authority area. These replaced the Area Child Protection Committees formed under the Children Act 1989 (HM Government, 1989). These Boards had clear statutory duties conferred upon them with individual agencies, including schools and colleges, and were given a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people alongside the duty to cooperate.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards hold the statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, with statutory partners that have a duty to cooperate in this endeavour (HM Government, 2004). Others who were not given the duty directly could also join the Board if agreed by the core members. What this meant for the Board in terms of responsibilities was to:

- oversee and agree the thresholds for referrals and assessments (and then to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these);
- ensure that the Looked After Children (LAC) processes are in place and effective;
- ensure that all Children In Need (CIN) processes are in place and effective;
- on the death of a child ensure a full investigation is undertaken, including the writing of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and that learning is taken from these and changes put into place to improve the protection of children;
- safeguard Children In Need (CIN) in all areas of risk, for example, parents with substance misuse (including alcohol), domestic violence, missing education, mental health issues, those children and young people who are exploited or trafficked and all those with a disability;
- promote the welfare of children, for example, reduce the numbers of those killed or seriously injured on the roads, reduce accidents in the home;

- ensure children and young people are not bullied and are safe using the cybernet;
- ensure safe recruitment of staff;
- deliver multi-agency training for staff in child protection processes; and
- ensure good communication, including with the media and produce an Annual report and and Annual Plan.

The work also includes the requirement to undertake Section 11 audits. It means that the Board also needs to monitor the effectiveness of organisations'

implementation of their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This is in relation to their own services and any that they may have been contracted out to deliver (HM Government, 2006b).

The responsibilities of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards broadly encompass the requirements set down under 'Every Child Matters' in relation to the outcome of 'keep safe' (HM Government, 2003). Under the Children Act (HM Government 2004) and the roles and responsibilities for Directors of Children's Services defined therein (HM Government, 2008) the responsibility for Local Safeguarding Children Boards falls within the remit of the Director of Children's Services. The Lead Member for

Children's Services can be a member of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, but as an observer only. As a result of a further, very public, child death referred to as 'BabyP', the government, through the Department of Children, Schools and Families insisted that each Local Safeguarding Children Board should have an independent appointed Chair, and not, as had developed as more general practice, the local Director of Children's Services. This position was confirmed in the reviewed statutory guidance in relation to safeguarding issues (HM Government, 2013).

The differences between the two new organisations of the Children's Trust and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board are in relation to two areas – that of the focus of the five outcomes developed under 'Every Child Matters', where the Children's Trust Board is responsible for achieving all of the outcomes, whilst the Local Safeguarding Children Board is responsible for broadly one of these, that of 'keep safe'. The other difference is that of membership of the key players within the Children Act, where the Lead Member for Children's Services can only be an observer on the Local Safeguarding Children Board and yet is acceptable as a full member and even the Chair of the Children's Trust Board. The Director of

Children's Services is accountable to both, yet is also responsible for their development and the local leadership across all organisations engaged in delivering children's services, alongside the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Chief Executive of the local authority and the Leader of the Council. The Children's Trust Board holds the Local Safeguarding Children Board to account and usually presents its Annual Report and Annual Plan to the Children's Trust Board.

The Director of Children's Services has the responsibility of developing not one, not two, but three separate organisations. That of the Children's Trust arrangements, the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the local authority as a first tier leader. Because the question of my research relates to the leadership of children's services I am focusing on the leadership of change role within the organisational development and change programme necessary within the Children's Trust arrangements and the development of the local authority as organisations, with less, if any focus on the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Part of the contextual complex change does encompass child protection systems, but these refer mainly to the practice of social work teams within the local authority rather than the

practice of the Local Safeguarding Board, which has the responsibility of holding the Director of Children's Services to account for these changes.

### **1.2.4 The Contextualisation of National Backdrop**

Social construction is a social process. It cannot exist as separate to our own involvement in the world. Moss and Petrie (2002) explore the social construct of children's services. They state that "while childhood may be a biological fact, the way in which it is understood and lived is socially determined...." Accepting social constructionism as a theory they also acknowledge the consequences. Through not seeking the essential child, they see a myriad different children, created by differing discourses: the 'school child', the 'looked after child', the 'child in need' etc..

This has enormous implications for policy, practice and provision. Moss and Petrie go on to discuss the connection between their image of the child and their understanding and image of public provision for children. A consequence of this construction is a business ethos – valuing return on investment. Furthermore it is a continuous process of automisation of the child in public policy. A particular need or problem is defined by a particular discipline or profession and a segment



of government. This in turn results in a service, with its attendant technologies, to deal with that need or problem. Each system sees the world through its own lens (Moss and Petrie, 2002).

This disconnectedness was certainly the case evidenced through the public enquiry into Victoria Climbié's death. However the government of the time through the Children Act (2004) sought to construct a system to encompass those separate and distinct services that had previously developed as 'children's services'.

With the advent of the coalition government this social construct did not reflect the values of their modernism. Policy development now sought to remove parts of the system again, particularly schools, through its Academy and Free Schools movement. However the business-imported idea of 'quality' is still in place. Moss and Petrie feel that linked economic and social factors play a part.

*"changes in the economy and employment, with the context of increasing global competitiveness bring business and government to the point of needing both more 'services' and services that are more efficient in the production of desired outcomes"* (Moss and Petrie, 2002).

The social construct of policy continues, the value base is different and yet is subsumed within the social construct in practice – of the world and within the world. There are shifts in power and more recently a government which does not value local government constructs. Alongside this there are dominant changes in approach to the education and social care systems. Local leaders must lead the service areas into a world which is not yet made.

### **1.3 Developing the Research Project**

Children's Services came into being in the Children Act (HM Government, 2004). This was legislation which resulted from the very publicly mourned death of Victoria Climbié. It brought together education departments and children's social care sections within top tier local authorities, changing them from Local Education Authorities (LEA) to Children's Services Authorities (CSA). The legislation also required that various partners outside the local authority co-operate within a partnership arrangement led by the Director of Children's Services.

This, at the same time, became a statutory role within each Children's Services Authority replacing that of the Director of Education as well as parts of the Director of Social Services', splitting the responsibilities for children's social care away from that of adult social care. Both sets of statutory duty were incorporated into the role of Director of Children's Services. A second role came into statute simultaneously, that of Lead Member for Children's Services, a political appointment for a local elected councillor to hold the portfolio area which encompassed all Children's Services, within, across, and beyond the Council. Both roles have statutory guidance for their delivery (HM Government, 2008).

The legislation and the emergence of statutory guidance, such as the roles described above, saw the beginning of a step change approach to developing services for children, young people and families. However, as the pace of change becomes speedier and more complex, the concept of chaos becomes a greater reality.

Fullan (2001) explores the question of how leaders can focus on certain key change themes that will allow them to lead effectively under messy conditions. He

expands this by going on to state that "Leadership is key to large scale improvement yet must be radically different than it has been. Further, effective leadership is in very short supply." (Fullan, 2001 p. xii). We live in chaotic times and conditions. Leaders must be able to operate under complex and uncertain circumstances. Fullan refers to this as "the wildness that lies in wait." (Fullan, 2001 p. xiii) I prefer the concept of "leading on the edge of chaos" (Murphy and Murphy, 2002).

At a time when national policy is particularly notable for its change programme, within a fiscal process of high reduction, in response to an economic crisis which led to high government borrowing across the world in order to 'rescue' failing banks, the idea of leading on the edge of chaos becomes very real.

This study seeks to explore, describe and understand the leadership of change within this convoluted mixture of national and local reformation. The focus on children's services is a deliberate choice to reflect the complexities of change required when moving from a single service segment of a multi-faceted organisation such as a local authority, to a multiple agency arrangement still led

from within that authority. When that section is already operating a change process due to legislation, emphasising the external influence of independent structures with their own foci, adaptation becomes more complex. This is taking place while the organisation of which it remains a part is undergoing its own complex transformation arrangements in order to respond to the national programme introduced by a new government which has inherited the problems and issues surrounding a national debt crisis. That is indeed a complex change management process.

This multiplicity of change calls for a strong model of leadership that whilst operating on the edge of chaos is adaptive enough to ensure the survival of not only the leader him-or herself but also the resultant organisation as a leading edge supplier and commissioner of those services required to support the most vulnerable in our society. The most vulnerable of any society, such as the poor, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, with disabilities or in need of protection and safety, live with increased risks when funding is reduced and the focus of change becomes financial savings and leaders are forced to view effectiveness

and efficiency as a bound approach instead of the impact of service delivery to meet needs in a more aspirational way.

If leadership can be adaptive within these circumstances, could it also move the organisation from 'good' to 'great' (Collins, 2001), turning threat into opportunity in such a way as to utilise change for the greater good of the community it serves?

The above was the focus of my thinking as I developed my research thoughts into an enquiry that could be further developed through design into my research project. The next steps were to explore the philosophical approach to the study, identifying the ontology and epistemology which underpinned my personal thinking on how I would develop the enquiry into research work.

## 1.4 Philosophical Approach

"The researcher-as-*bricoleur* is always already in the empirical world of experience. Still, this world is confronted, in part, through the lens that the scholar's paradigm, or interpretive perspective, provides. In turn, the world so conceived ratifies the

individual's commitment to the paradigm in question." (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998 p. xi).

Thus the positivist, post-positivist, constructionist and critical paradigms lead us to differing designs of the same research investigation. These are determined by the values and assumptions behind the research, as portrayed by the researcher. Whichever paradigm is central to the overall enquiry reflects the researcher's world view and their own value judgements.

Ontology is concerned with the quintessence of what reality means to an individual, either externally generated or produced by internal consciousness. Robson (2002) explores two opposing views of reality on a continuum of a standard view of science or positivism to a relativist view that there is no external reality independent of human consciousness; there are only different sets of meanings and classifications which people attach to the world (Robson, 2002).

The "five knowledge domains" as conceptualised by Ribbins and Gunter (2002) are helpful in looking at the wider framework of research and for this study find that the evaluative knowledge domain of abstracting and measuring the impact of leadership effectiveness on organisational outcomes to be pertinent. The study also aspires to the research becoming instrumental – providing leaders with effective leadership strategies to deliver organisational outcomes that impact positively on the people they serve.

The thesis focuses on the leadership of change within complex organisations that are politically managed locally, as well as being funded and therefore politically influenced, if not managed, by central government. Therefore the research seeks to understand different people's meanings and classifications which they attach to their world and as such the area of study reflects more of the relativist position than that of the positivist or the standard view of science.

Porter, in her introduction to the research module at Birmingham University in 2003, described epistemology as the philosophy of knowledge, a study of the nature of



knowledge and how we know it. It is the 'how' which helps us to determine the interpretive perspective or paradigm of any particular research project.

Children's Services as an organisational concept were brought about through legislation following the tragic death of Victoria Climbié in 2000. The resultant structures were a social construct of organisations mandated to work together in the interest of the child and their family. A plethora of guidance from the then Department for Children, Schools and Families placed a particular emphasis on 'working together to safeguard children' (HM Government, 2006a). Although this guidance was central to the implementation of the Children Act 2004, the government of the time sought a whole-system change in how organisations should work together. Since then, further guidance and legislation has clarified expectations of specific roles to be enacted within the system as explored above.

The research explores the leadership of change with children's services as the focus. The Director of Children's Services' role is central to this transformational process, but is perhaps not the only leadership role within the system. However it is the Director of Children's Services' leadership role which must champion the child

and parents, putting the needs of the child at the centre of all service delivery. The reality of the task to develop children's services is one of constructivism within the social entity of organisation. The paradigm, therefore, relates to social constructivism, which is the lens with which the researcher views the case study through, as the chosen methodology.

## 1.5 Developing the Research Questions

As I thought through the purpose for the research and how I could apply this in terms of putting together a coherent research project I developed the following question to frame my work.

When legislation and policy is given in a top down manner with guidance for implementation what is the role of local leadership – is it organisational development, the development of systems, or just managing in an arena of change: when the change is complex and demanding time wise, how do leaders deal with the transformation required?

In order to develop this wider enquiry into a workable research plan I focused the question into more specific areas.

1. What leadership model can be developed to deal with a complexity of change to achieve positive outcomes?
2. What principles of organisational development should be harnessed to support such a change?
3. How can leaders develop tools and systems to anchor services in continuous improvement when the organisation is embroiled within a process of change arising from a reduction in resources?
4. What are the common and divergent experiences, priorities, rewards, challenges and themes of leading change?

Specific data, information and other sources, such as national policy documents, emerging policy and direction, was planned to address each research question and are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.1: Data/Information Used to Address Research Questions**

Research Question	Data\Information Sources
1. What leadership model can be developed to deal with a complexity of change to achieve positive outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• Local and national documents – policy and data</li> <li>• Interview data from unstructured interviews with 19 senior leaders in a local authority</li> </ul>
2. What principles of organisational development should be harnessed to support such a change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• Local and national data, documents and policy areas</li> <li>• Interview data from unstructured interviews with 19 senior leaders in local authority</li> <li>• Reports from meetings</li> </ul>

<p>3. How can leaders develop tools and systems to anchor services in continuous improvement when the organisation is embroiled within a process of change arising from a reduction in resources?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• National and local data, policy and documents</li> <li>• Interview data from unstructured interviews with 19 senior leaders in local authority</li> <li>• Reflections and reflective analysis</li> </ul>
<p>4. What are the common and divergent experiences, priorities, rewards, challenges and themes of leading change?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview data from unstructured interviews with 19 senior leaders in local authority</li> <li>• Assessment and comparison of outcomes achieved through the life of the study</li> </ul>

## 1.6 Literature for the Research

Much has been written about leadership in the private sector and as progressive governments have moved closer to the concept that the private sector holds lessons for the public sector, demands are made that the public sector emulates the leadership of those companies who excel. A range of books and ideologies have abounded in order to present research and conclusions that highlight the actions of the best of these, some of which I have referred to above.

The National College for Leadership and Children's Services utilises the work of Heifetz (Heifetz, 2002) and more latterly with Grashow and Linsky (Heifetz, et al., 2009), as the leadership model to support Directors of Children's Services achieve improved service delivery for the benefit of children, young people and their families. Heifetz's work with Grashow and Linsky (2009) arises from the Leadership Education project at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, drawing on dozens of years of research amongst leaders and managers in the private sector and politicians in the public realm, encompassing those amongst the not-for-profit and in teaching. They explore the values in leadership and the roots of authority, whilst developing adaptive work and the application of power. They go on to discuss such requisites as courage: to act outside the

narrow confines of a job description and create adaptive work which creates risk, conflict and instability because, as they posit, addressing the issues underlying adaptive problems may involve upending deep and entrenched norms. They propose that leadership requires "disturbing people – but at a rate they can absorb". Adaptive pressures, they believe, typically arise when there are changes in the market which affect the company (Heifetz, et al., 2009).

Heifetz (1994), in particular, values and describes leadership as that of mobilizing people to tackle tough problems and this is the image at the heart of his writing. He sees this as the opposite of the idea that leadership means influencing the community to follow the leader's vision. However, the focus remains on individuals and their actions to deal with separate problems and issues (Heifetz, 1994).

Gunter (2001) explores leaders and leadership in education, albeit based on the product of intellectual work. Her contribution here is to theorise leadership in education, through her undertakings, thinking with Bourdieu's thinking tools of *habitus* and *field*. Gunter presents the leadership territory as an arena of struggle in which researchers, writers, policy-makers and practitioners take up and/or present

positions. Gunter (Gunter, 2001) argues that there is a preferred model in leadership that permeates policy texts, is the product of laboratory science and it is labelled 'transformational' leadership. By using Bourdieu's thinking tools particularly around 'fields', Gunter explores leadership within organisations as multi-faceted organisms and begins to draw out comparisons with 'distributive' leadership, where leadership is a shared model of working and not an arena held by an individual (Gunter, 2001).

Neither author appears to contemplate the image of change as a model of leadership where change is chaotic, such as in the writing of Fullan (2001). Fullan states "We are living in chaotic conditions. Thus leaders must be able to operate under complex, uncertain circumstances" and refers to a chaos theory concept, "wildness lies in wait." (Fullan, 2001 p. xiii).

"The real trouble with this world of ours is not that it is an unreasonable world, or even that it is a reasonable one. The commonest kind of trouble is that it is nearly reasonable, but not quite. Life is not an illogicality; yet it is a trap for logicians. It



looks just a little more mathematical and regular than it is; its exactitude is obvious, but its in-exactitude is hidden; its wildness lies in wait." (Fullan, 2001 p. xiii)

Not a bad mantra, he states, for leaders in complex times, would be: "seek out and honour hidden inexactitudes." (Fullan, 2001 p. xiii).

This study seeks to explore and build on all three theories of leadership described above. As a piece of research it is important in trying to understand the application of leadership theory as it relates to complex organisations in a period of rapid change and with a multiplicity of layers. The change in political leadership at national level to a new coalition government, within the context of fiscal restraints, puts additional pressures on leaders within the public arena to manage policy shifts at an increasing pace whilst reducing resources in a very real sense at a rate never before realised. Indeed the adaptive problems are alive and well and impacting now.

Chapter two explores the literature further and enables me to develop a model of leadership which my research can draw on. It helps me to begin to develop my theories on the leadership of change.

The research explores the leadership of change within children's services, surrounded by legislation, and 'enablers' leading to analysis and interpretations of the effectiveness of leadership on organisational outcomes and ultimately on improved outcomes for children and young people. This analysis of real time research develops areas of strategy which can be used by organisational leaders to deliver desired outcomes within a change programme, situated within a rapidly changing world of a new political coalition government and financial reduction.

## 1.6 Methodology

In chapter three I explain the design I have developed for my research project.

*"Design is concerned with turning research questions into projects."* (Robson, 2002 p. 79).

The questions in this study are for the investigation of one case – that of the leadership of change within the arena of children's services. It will mean the gathering and analysis of a large number of features in respect of the political dimensions, the multi-faceted organisational requirements of a children's trust arrangement within the complex organisation of a local authority or council and the various aspects of leadership within it. Nevertheless, it remains focused on one case. Relating my research to the schematic comparisons of methodologies undertaken by Creswell (2003) I have determined that my method is that of a case study.

Quantification of the data is not a priority. Indeed the qualitative nature of the data is the focus of collection and analysis, studying the natural occurrence of leadership skills and knowledge. Here the main concern has been with understanding the study itself.

It is a case study of one local authority, its delivery of children's services and how the leadership of this, within the wider context of change across the council, manages the change processes. In using the case study approach it seeks to

understand the world of leadership for children's services and interprets that world in terms of the actors involved.

## **1.7 Research Methods**

The study uses multiple methods of evidence and data collection. The varying instruments used in this study have been detailed in Table 1.1 above. The methodology leads towards a triangulation of data in order to test the evidence in more than one reality. The study will also need contextualisation and as such seeks to utilise data sources from the internet in order to analyse policy and emerging policy, thus assessing the impact of changing policy on the context within which a local authority operates.

The aspects of understanding and exploration have been undertaken through in-depth research interviews, utilising active listening techniques through asking open questions. The interview questions, whilst ultimately allowing the case study to be analysed against the original research questions, were drawn up to explore certain phenomenon which came to light through discussions and the analysis of documents (mainly active ones, but including some archival). Other source

materials have included conference key-note speakers witnessed by the researcher, letters from ministers to local authorities and the House of Lords, as well as national consultation materials which gave rise to the overall direction of policy development by government.

## **1.8 Building a Theory**

The analysis of the data is the central activity of the study and constitutes the majority of the dissertation. It is contained in chapter four. The analysis draws on the work of Thomas (2011). I found his writing less dense than Yin (2009) and his methods of analysis held more resonance for me, within social construct approaches, than that of Simons (2009).

Thomas (2011) suggests that the case study should be theory-building. Ideas are developed beyond that of the exploration. It is about building a framework of ideas that are not overtly connected to preformed notions. It is perhaps impossible to not connect to pre-existing ideas; after all I have just undertaken a literature review in chapter two which explores these. It is about having no commitment to them in the analysis stage (Thomas, 2011).

I looked to develop theory and began my analysis through the identifying themes and categories as building blocks. These I termed as 'temporary construct theories'. After bringing them together from within all of the data they became my own construct theories, which enabled me to build the analysis towards its final conclusions. Furthermore, because I was able to use more than one data source I was able to triangulate the information and develop a 'rich picture'. I was also able to retain and describe a story-line throughout the research analysis. I used narrative arising from the interview transcripts throughout the analysis. Thomas (2011) states:

*"In a case study you must make sense of the whole by retaining the fibres that bind a whole story together. Those fibres concern time, place, meaning, intention and much more, all interrelating."* (Thomas, 2011 p. 184).

I also unashamedly utilized dramaturgy in my writing up of the analysis. Again Thomas (2011) came to the fore as my written mentor on the case study. He describes dramaturgy as using actors, role and stages in discussions of interactions that take place between people (Thomas, 2011). I became the narrator of the storyline and subplots provided by life as well as using the narration of

interviewees to bring the 'story' as research to life. Hopefully it has also been able to promote thinking for the reader.

## **1.9 Discussing the Findings**

In chapter five I draw all of the thinking and analysis together to reflect back on the original questions asked of my case study. I look at each question in turn to see if the research has indeed answered the questions posed and conclude with the overall question which addresses the purpose of the research. There are some areas which would benefit from further research outside of this particular case study and I attempt to suggest these as they come forward in this chapter.

## **1.10 Drawing Conclusions**

In the final chapter, chapter six, I review the limitations of the research as well as the implications of it for academic debate, for practice and for policy. Through these conclusions I have confidence that the case study has allowed me the opportunity to bring evidence together from a variety of sources to develop and support arguments that would not have been possible to explore using other forms of enquiry. However, I am also aware that I have produced knowledge that is

provisional, in other words, good until we find out something else which explains it better.

I hope that you find some enjoyment from reading this research, and that in doing so it invokes further thinking and questioning not just of the research itself but also of how it may be applicable to the theory of leading change in the complex world we all reside in. For me there have been some revealing reflections which I hope come across strongly in my conclusions. How the political nature of local authorities impacts on the leadership of change. The need for those leaders to develop coherence-making, beyond that described by Fullan (2001) through making sense of the edicts and policy directions of a national government in order to interpret and implement appropriately within the local authority. How the 'moral purpose' depicted by Fullan (2001; 2008) and reiterated by Brookes and Grint (2010) as 'public value', is based on an outcome focused approach which is beyond visioning for the change. It clearly identifies the outcomes which are being sought and uses focus and determination to ensure that staff, partners and others work together to achieve these. Furthermore it recognises the need to be aware of risks and difficulties alongside the barriers to change that individuals may put in the way.



### 1.11 The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in chapters to enable the reader to follow the journey of the research to its final conclusions. Chapter one introduces the purpose and context of the research, how the philosophical framework has been developed including the framing of the questions the research seeks to answer. There is detail on how the research methods will address the questions posed and the exploration of the basis for the literature review. I have also explored the *raison d'être* for the research design to utilise the case study approach and explained my approach to building theory.

Chapter two focuses on the literature that I have used in order to develop a theoretical model for the leadership of change in a complex world. It draws specifically on the work of Fullan (2001: 2008: 2011a: 2011b: 2013) for complex change, touching on Simplexity as developed by Kluger (2008). The work of Bass & Riggio (2006) and Burns (1978: 2003) supported my exploration of transformational leadership and allowed me to draw conclusions on approaches to distributed and shared leadership. Public leadership was explored through the

work of Brookes and Grint (2010). I also explore organisational development through Handy (1993); Beckhard & Harris (1987); and Gallos (2006). A systems thinking approach is explored through Fullan (2011) and Seddon (2008). It is within chapter two that I also expand on the context of change for children's services through legislation, statutory guidance and national policy, exploring the three areas of change which are the focus of the overall change programme.

Chapter three is the research design where I explore and explain the use of a case study design and the philosophy of that choice. This chapter includes the research methodology, data collection and how the data was recorded and stored.

Although I reference Simons (2009) and Yin (2009) I have utilised Thomas (2011) as my written mentor in developing the design and the implementation of a case study as the approach to my research.

Chapter four contains the research analysis and tells the story of the leadership of complex change in the case study. The analysis explores the construct theories arising from the research and includes a model for leading change derived from the research analysis. The data is triangulated where possible and care has been

taken to code interviews and other data to retain confidentiality in the narration. It is here that the 'voices' in the research are heard. Use of construct theories enables the reader to begin to identify the theoretical areas which differ from and build on the theory from the literature review.

Chapter five reflects on the analysis and begins to draw conclusions from it, suggesting areas of theory building and other areas of research which could be pursued. It includes reflections on the differences between the public and private sectors and in particular the different leadership roles for sense making to enable the interpretation of national legislation and policy to appropriate delivery vehicles in the local areas. It reflects on the need for confidence, credibility, reputation, focus and determination required to utilise an outcome focused approach to leading complex change.

Chapter six is the final chapter where I looked at the implications for my research. I acknowledge areas of limitation and detail the implications as I saw them for further academic debate and how this builds on the literature and body of knowledge that I have reviewed in chapter two. Furthermore I reviewed the

implications for the future practice of leadership within a complex change arena as well as the potential inferences for policy.

I conclude this introductory chapter with a focus on the ethical basis I have used to underpin my research, both in the process of collecting data and in the writing up of the analysis. I am hopeful that these ethics are evident throughout my work.

## **1.12 Ethical Considerations**

It is important to consider the ethics of any research project and to be clear about my rules of conduct and conformity to a code or set of principles whilst undertaking my research.

I have based these considerations on ethics research through the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and I have followed the five principles of Harm; Autonomy; Privacy; Reciprocity and Equity (Hamersley and Traianou 2007). I have also discussed the ethical position from revised guidance in 2011 (BERA, 2011). These are discussed in more detail in chapter three of this thesis on pages

187 to 191. The research project has also been submitted to and agreed by the ethics committee of the university prior to the commencement of the study undertaken.

It should be noted here that although as a research practitioner I am currently employed within a children's services authority Readers should not unjustifiably assume the identity of the authority concerned on the basis of some presumed similarity found in my research. Care has been taken to remove any references to the case study area and assumptions should not be made regarding any current or previous employment the researcher may have been engaged in, with regard to the research undertaken.

# 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the theoretical framework for the empirical work in relation to the research project. It looks at the leadership of change within the context of children's services alongside national legislation and local policy making.

The chapter is structured around three of the specific questions asked of the research. It also encompasses three areas of specific change directly impacting on children's services at the time of the research – that of managing in fiscally insecure times; implementation of structural changes in schools towards Academy status, which some believe heralds the end of educational duties for local authorities; and finally, the development of new ways of working through Munro's (2010) review of child protection. I use this as the context to develop a model for leadership which is explored further through the analysis of the research data.

Exploration of the fourth question is undertaken through the analysis of the

research. All of the sub questions are then reflected on again in the context of the original research question in my conclusions.

## **2.2 The Complex Nature of Leadership**

In this section my primary focus is that of the sub question one – what leadership model can be developed to deal with a complexity of change to achieve positive outcomes? However, the inter-relationship of the research questions does lead the review of literature to draw from all areas of the enquiry to determine and refine a leadership model. The complexity of leadership is compounded further by the nature of the organisation of children's services within any local authority, which is of itself multifaceted and complex, both in organisation and operation.

I start from the premise that there is a definite complexity to the organisation of children's services in any local authority area. The Director of Children's Services has a leadership role within three organisations: the Children's Trust arrangements, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the local authority. Only one of these involves direct line management responsibilities and yet this direct leadership also

incorporates the role of a senior leader within the local authority as a whole, a complex organisation in its own right.

So, whilst leading corporately the role must reflect the good of the local authority at all times, otherwise as a leader they would not be viewed as acting corporately, leading to tensions within that role and between the other corporate leaders of Directors, Chief Executive and leading politicians. The paramount leadership role therefore, must be that of a corporate leader for the Council, whilst balancing a major leadership role as a strong partner within the two other organisational structures, acting as a champion for children, young people and families across the local area.

With the advent of the Children Act 2004 (HM Government, 2004) an expectation was laid down in statute as explored above, that the role of the leadership for Children's Services would encompass the leadership of change. Handy (1993) looks at change as an inevitable aspect of any organisation in order that it should always be learning and growing, not necessarily in size but definitely in effectiveness – better is not necessarily bigger. It is only through change that the



outcomes for children and young people can be improved, as Friedman (2005) firmly posits – “if you keep doing what you’ve always done, you keep getting what you always got.” (Friedman, 2005 p. title). An essential part of the culture of Children's Services then is the development of a culture of change.

Fullan (2001) has explored change and the leadership of change and cites in his works for leading in a culture of change, the necessity of leaders, in order to be effective in complex times, to be guided by moral purpose, understand the change process, build relationships, utilise knowledge building and sharing to develop a congruence with the processes, in order to harness creativity where complexity keeps people on ‘the edge of chaos’. It is this ambiguity, Fullan (2001) believes, that effective leaders need to tolerate in order to maintain their creativity and that along the way they must seek coherence. Coherence making, he states, is a perennial pursuit and it is this sense-making that maintains equilibrium. In a culture of change disequilibrium is common, hence the feeling of leading on the edge of chaos, however this disequilibrium is valuable as long as coherence can be fostered.

".... moral purpose is concerned with direction and results; understanding change, building relationships, and knowledge building honour the complexity and discovery of the journey; and coherence-making extracts valuable patterns worth retaining. But alas, none of this is quite so linear and fixed as it would seem when one reads a simple description of each component." (Fullan, 2001 p. 7).

This would appear to be in direct contrast if not conflict with the position taken by Handy (1993) when looking at role and role stress. However, role definition gives clarity to the 'what' of leadership, whereas Fullan seeks to define the 'how' of leadership. It is through understanding the 'how' of leadership that leading change becomes possible.

Fullan (2001) then goes on to review personal characteristics which he believes all effective leaders possess, labelling these as a constellation of *energy-enthusiasm-hopefulness*. Fullan puts these concepts into a framework for leadership, see Figure 2.1 below.

Fullan (2001) reminds us that a culture of change operates at speed and that the nonlinearity on the one hand also gives equally great potentiality for creative breakthroughs on the other. The paradox he states is that "transformation would not be possible without the accompanying messiness." (Fullan, 2001 p. 31).

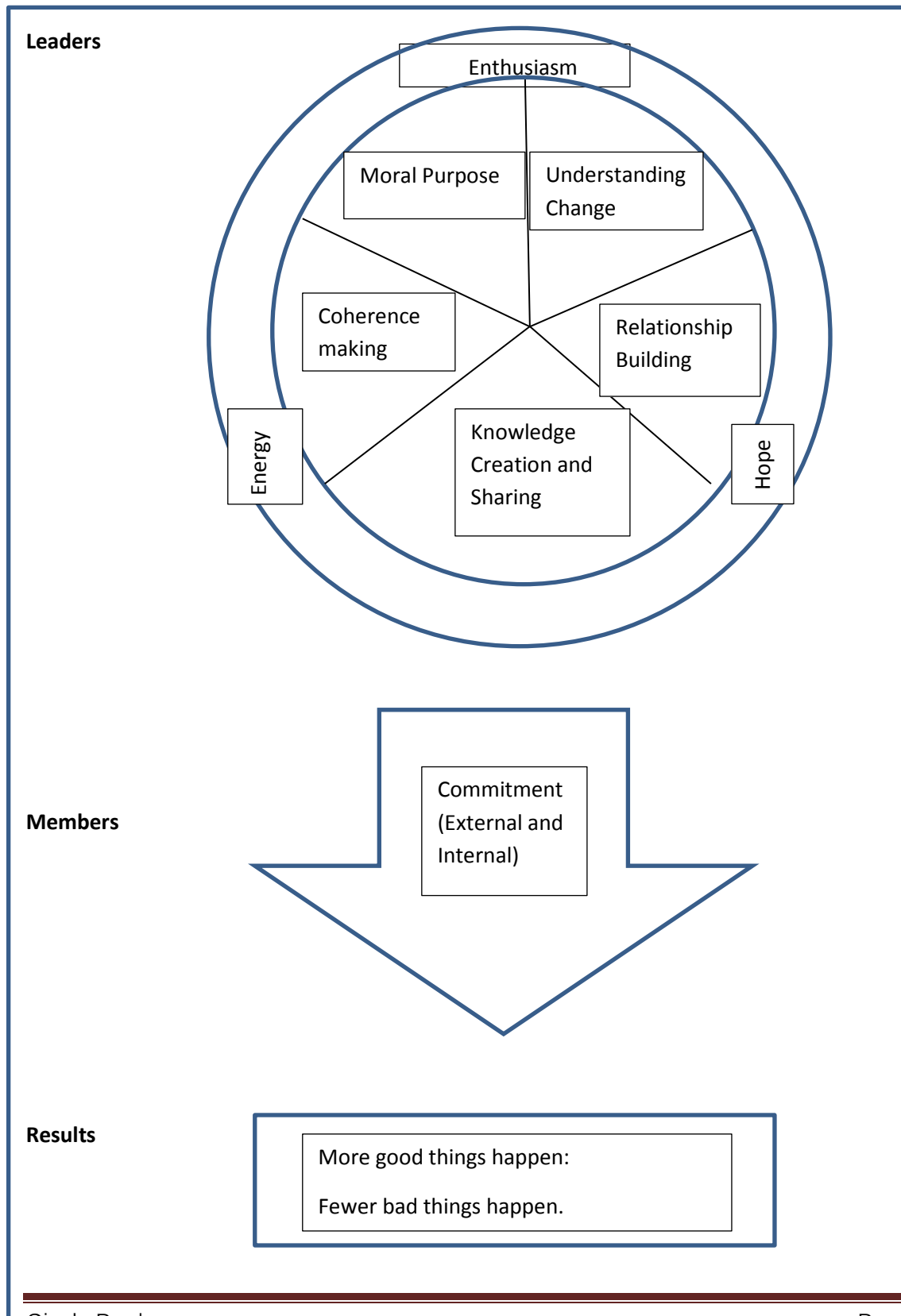
On leadership he goes on to say that "leading in a culture of change means creating a culture (not just a structure) of change. It does not mean adopting innovations, one after another; it does mean producing the capacity to seek, critically assess, and selectively incorporate new ideas and practices – all the time, inside the organisation as well as outside it." (Fullan, 2001 p. 44). He then refers to complexity science, stating that "living systems (like businesses) cannot be *directed* along a linear path. Unforeseen consequences are inevitable. The challenge is to *disturb* them in a manner that approximates the desired outcomes." (Fullan, 2001 pp. 45-46).

Here we can link *directed* with *transactional* leadership, where change is more about substituting one thing for another, to exchange places or to pass one thing to another and *disturb* with *transformational* leadership, where change is more

profound, a metamorphosis or radical change in outward form or inner character.

(Burns, 1978).

Figure 2 1: A Framework for Leadership Reproduced from Fullan (Fullan, 2001 p. 4).



Burns' work in 1978 and later in 2003 analysed the world leaders of our recent history. His biographical reflections on Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency as a case study in change caused him to move from his analysis of transactional leadership to that of transformational leadership. Critical for Burns was that "transformational leaders had to be uplifting" (Burns, 1978 pp. 19-20). His work on leadership and power, explored power as personal and referred to 'power-wielders' – both for good and for evil.

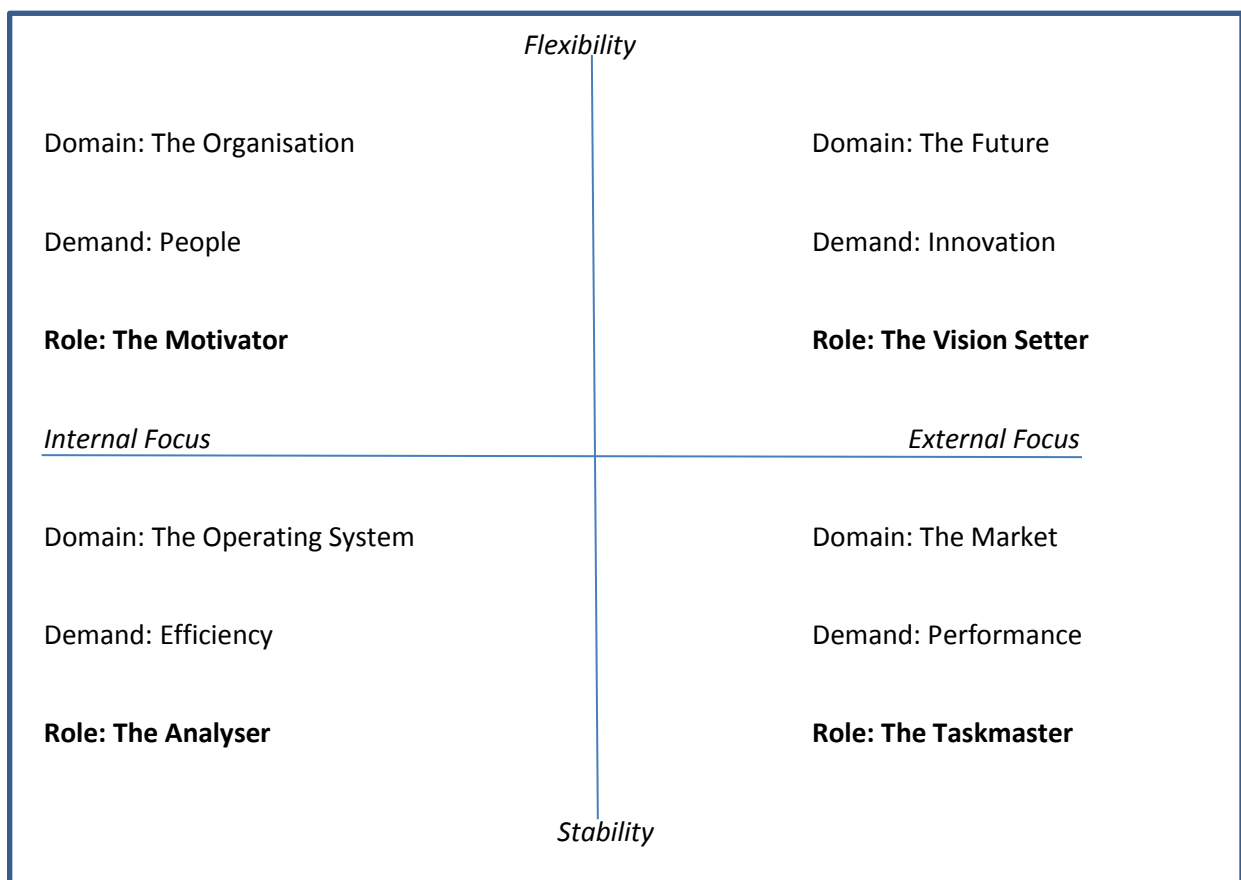
His central concept was that the relationship between leaders and followers is inseparable, but that the essence of this is the interaction of persons with different levels of motivation and of power potential, including skill, in pursuit of a common, or at least a joint, purpose. Transactional leadership, he goes on to say is when this interaction is about an exchange of things, valued by both follower and leader, they recognise each other as a person, but the relationship remains focused on the exchange or bargaining process. Beyond that it does not go.

"Transformational leadership," states Burns, "occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality." (Burns, 1978 p. 20). Bass and Riggio take this a step further in their analysis of authentic and inauthentic leadership where the differences are about the concern with the desires and needs of others: "with authentic leaders, followers," they state, "are treated as ends and not just means." (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Their research leads them toward transactional and transformational leadership as interchangeable, being both directive and participative, thus using transactional to bargain for support and transformational to put that support into practice within a value base or moral purpose that transcends the individual power base (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Quinn (1996) explores this further through a senior leadership role, where he explored leadership behaviours of CEOs. Quinn believes that deep change, through transformational leadership, can only be achieved if the leader themselves change within, leading through that personal change to organisational change. In a study of over nine hundred CEOs Quinn and Hart examined both transactional and transformational behaviour, looking to see how that related to their ability to

enact deep change (Quinn, 1996). This led them to four general competing roles: vision setter, motivator, analyser, and taskmaster and are depicted in figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2.: Leadership: The Competing Roles from Quinn (Quinn, 1996 p. 149).



In this analysis Quinn looks at both the Vision Setter role and that of the Motivator as being integral to transformational leadership with the Analyser and Taskmaster roles as being that aligned to transactional leadership. Linking the performance of



their businesses with the role of the CEO, Quinn measured three dimensions: short-term financial performance; growth and future positioning for the business; and the non-financial aspects of performance, such as employee satisfaction, product quality and social responsibility (Quinn, 1996).

Whilst looking to determine and evidence transformational leadership, the analysis resulted in the conclusion that the CEOs more frequently engaged in transactional leadership which was felt to give some insight into the uneasiness exhibited by the CEOs. The roles they favoured involved preserving the status quo with a natural attraction to the controlling behaviours embedded in transactional leadership. In the transactional paradigm, people are more concerned about doing what is right for them rather than doing what could be seen as right for the organisation. Yet, states Quinn, "the key to being a successful leader is the ability to integrate and perform the roles of vision setter, motivator, analyser and task master. This requires the use of both the transformational and the transactional paradigms." (Quinn, 1996 p. 151).

To explore this within the public sector we need to look at the work of Brookes and Grint (2010) where they introduce the concept of “public value as the outcome of effective leadership, requiring the identification of social goals, delivering those goals in a manner that gains trust and legitimacy, ensuring that the public sector organisation has the capability and the capacity to deliver these stated goals. “ (Brookes and Grint, 2010). This links the moral purpose or value base of transformational leadership. However, Brookes and Grint see this as an outcome rather than an integral aspect of the leadership role.

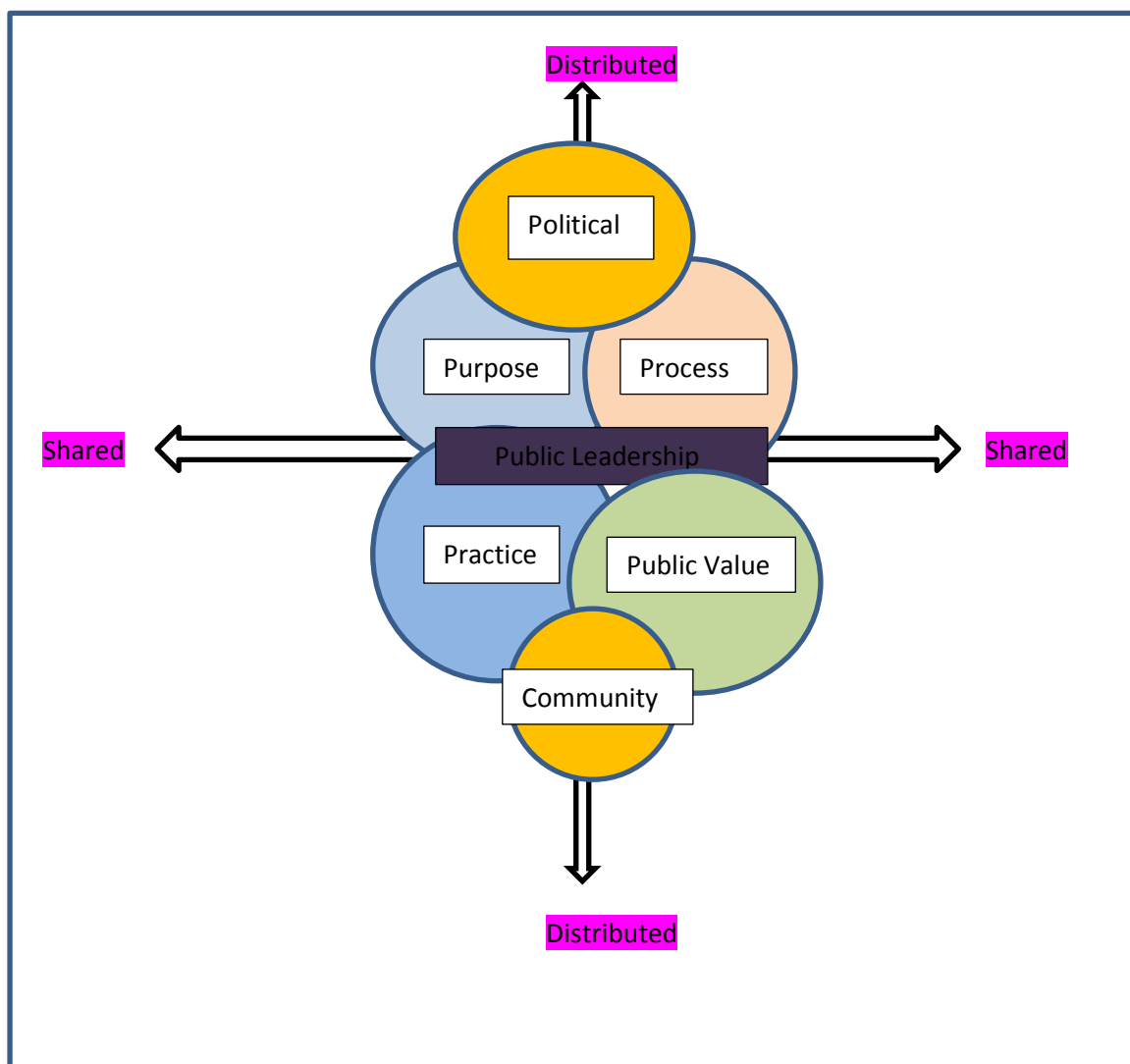
Their view of the public sector leadership role is that of collective leadership across departments, and is explored within the remit of civil servants – usually the description for the domain of central government administrators. They draw on a range of articles to develop the New Public Leadership role, building on previous work which defined New Public Management. Through the collection of articles the reader begins to explore the complexity of public leadership within the context of the 21st century. Some work was developed to address this within the Performance and Innovation Unit under Tony Blair, the then Prime Minister, from 1998.

Furthermore there is recognition of a complexity in the public sector which is highly diverse in character, governance arrangements and size. Alongside this there are competing needs both internally and externally, reflecting the plurality of our society as well as our democratic processes. Therefore Schofield and Pegg (2010) conclude that these differences in size and diversity of character result in a leadership within the public sector which greatly varies from one area to another, resulting in the challenge of defining leadership in the sector as being further exacerbated by the numerous challenges of current times (Schofield and Pegg, 2010 p. 199).

Lelièvre-Finch (2010) looks at the complexity of leadership as it moves from bureaucracies to networks; citing the fact that public leaders are now dealing with a broad range of organisations to deliver public value. Her main concerns are with the governance of partnerships, and within these there are a range of differing organisations, some from a public sector background such as the voluntary sector, health, police etc. but others include working with the private (and for profit) sector in differing ways. She explores the public-private partnerships where a 'risk-

sharing' relationship is developed alongside the reality of public service delivery chains. What emerges, she feels, is that of hybridisation rather than a paradigm shift. It would appear that transformational leadership is acceptable within the private sector but not easily translated into the public sector. (Lelièvre-Finch, 2010 p. 283).

Figure 2.3: New Public Leadership Framework, (Brookes and Grint, 2010 p. 344)



Brookes and Grint, (2010) draw from such positions in their collection of papers to develop the model or framework for the new public leadership depicted in Figure 2.3 above. The collective leadership style they promote is one where the responsibility for leadership is distributed throughout each organisation and shared across other organisations or institutions. This is depicted by the vertical line representing the distributed or internal leadership combined with the horizontal line representing shared or external leadership. The political and the community aspects are respectively illustrated in the upper and lower quadrant of the model to demonstrate the inputs of political and community leadership on the dynamics of leadership and the four inner segments. The inner segments, overlapping as they do, show the way these inputs are transformed through both individual and organisational leadership. In this model the transformative leadership relies on the process of defining and implementing the purpose of leadership, based in this case on the political and community inputs, into publically valued outputs through the practice of that leadership, which is described here as 'public leadership' (Brookes and Grint, 2010).

As a researcher, looking at the literature on leadership, I am not convinced by the conclusions drawn by Brookes and Grint (2010) above. They refer to transformational leadership and yet reflect what Burns would define as transactional leadership. Their collaborative leadership view does not reflect the complexities of the shared leadership model, bringing together other organisations across the public and private sector either through partnership or through delivery chains; each has a different relationship which must be nurtured and maintained. No doubt moving from bureaucracies with transactional leadership would result in some change, but I am not sure that it would achieve the complex change required in the current context of local authority working – the deep change purported by Quinn (1996).

However the continuing work of Fullan whose deliberations over the years have been focused on education leadership, has, in the last decade, supported reform of government in Canada whilst also being involved with several others to engage in real change projects, in particular whole-system reform. Fullan's work (2011) also reflects Quinn's theories (1996) in his belief that the leadership answers, when dealing with change, start inside, in the personal, looking for external connections to further develop a leaders own thinking and action.

Here Fullan extols the practice of leadership as a means of developing the change leader, arguing that most good ideas come from examining the good practices of others and that theory is counterintuitive, building his arguments on the work of Mintzberg (2004) where he (Mintzberg) wrote a critique of MBAs, concluding that MBA graduates should have 'Warning: NOT prepared to manage!' written on their foreheads (Fullan, 2011). Mintzberg was not of course decrying theory, his search was for a different approach to management education where managers who were actually 'doing the job' could learn from that experience instead of the conventional routes of mainly young people studying conventional MBA programmes when they had little or no experience. The approach of Mintzberg here was for existing managers to significantly improve their own practice through experiencing a thoughtful classroom (Mintzberg, 2004).

As a practitioner-researcher these works hold a resonance for me particularly in respect of developing this research through a 'thoughtful classroom' (Mintzberg, 2004). However, there is a need to make sense of the leadership model in order to

reflect how the leaders within today's Children's Services can meet the complex change needs required in today's local authorities.

"Sense-making" was a concept first explained by Karl Weick and explored by (Ancona, et al., 2012) in an article written for the Harvard Business Review and presented during conference proceedings for the Association of Directors of Children's Services. It was commented that Weick likened the process of sense-making to cartography. But drawing a map of a leadership model for sense-making will be dependent on what factors are chosen to focus upon and what factors are chosen to be represented on any terrain of leadership. For the means of this research three areas have been chosen to focus upon and they are explored within the context of the Children's Trust as an organisation, itself a changing landscape of different agencies and their relationships with each other and the local authority as the focus of this case study.

## **2.3 Fiscal Crisis**

The current fiscal crisis facing national government and arising from the economic downturn has led to a response by the Coalition Government of reducing public



spending in order to reduce borrowing. This impacts on local authorities' budgets by passing these reductions down through all areas of public spending.

Reductions began in 2010 and although the Government first positioned itself with calls for efficiencies in public services the extent of the cuts required of local authorities soon led these organisations towards difficult decisions for re-structuring.

With the bulk of local authority budgets spent on staffing levels, most local authorities had to turn to organisational development aspects of leading change in order to reduce staff numbers. Within the local authority which is the subject of this research, the first reductions were on management de-layering, with fifty percent of these roles being removed through a management restructure within the first eighteen months of the cuts coming through. This initial change programme reflected organisational development as a method of leading change through structural reform.

If we look at the work of Beckhard and Harris (1987) where they focus on organisational transitions, balancing stability and change, their work explores the

need to move from the present state of an organisation to the future state through a transition state in order to develop an appropriate system to manage those transitions in a world of continuous change (Beckhard and Harris, 1987). Their research, through case studies, identifies six challenges which they believe face those managing complex institutional change. Their work is based on the private sector and a concern here is whether these challenges can be applied to the public sector. The following analysis attempts to address this.

**Table 2.1 :Challenges Within the Private Sector in Comparison with the Public Sector**

Challenges for the private sector	Relevance to the public sector
1. <i>Changing the shape of the organisations</i> , responding to world-wide competition, dramatic growth of technology, expansion patterns, e.g. takeovers, mergers, re-structuring - transforming own shape.	Dramatic growth in technology has an impact and can change the way the public sector responds to its citizenship; use of web etc. for routine business. There have been periods of expansion in economic growth periods, however falling resources within the current economic climate with some local authorities looking at joining together in joint ventures for economy of scale, some with private sector partners, but definitely transforming their own shape, including down-sizing.
2. <i>Changes in the mission or 'reason to be'</i> . For the same reasons as above – re-	The public sector is still looking to meet the needs of citizens, however, changes in demography, older citizens

<p>examining their 'reason to be', developing strategies for establishing or broadening a niche for themselves.</p>	<p>alongside fast growing number of citizens and the tensions of faster growing number of young citizens. Also the public sector is moving away from a paternalistic state and the expectation that the local authority can meet all needs, so the emerging need for citizens taking more responsibility for self and others. Alongside this is the reduction in funding to the public sector, where they cannot deliver all services that may be required. Leading to a change from service delivery to 'place shaping' and championing – making sure that those who deliver service achieve the same moral purpose, e.g. education, economic development, prosperous areas, safe areas including safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, with the increased challenges of leadership to achieve this.</p>
<p>3. <i>Changes in ways of doing business:</i> environmental changes, not just 'green environment' but also 'greed' environment, shifts in priorities of leadership, changes in structures, strategy and management style increasingly demanded.</p>	<p>Linked to above where the local authority cannot deliver all services. The Localism Act (2012) contains the Community Right to Challenge (CRTC), which can be likened to Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) of the previous Conservative government. There is already a mixed economy of commissioning and direct delivery, but overall this does not necessarily lead to savings, so decisions still need to be made about levels of service as well as how these could be delivered. CRTC reflects the government ethos of expecting the private sector to drive</p>

	<p>down costs through efficiencies, but this is done against a backdrop for the private sector <i>raison d'être</i> for profit making for shareholders as well as wealth for senior management, e.g. corporate jets etc. The local authority still needs to make decisions on what savings to make on what services leading to overall reductions in service delivery. Whilst a private company is reducing costs to increase profit, e.g. pay staff less, reduced quality of service delivery, examples include recent 'scandals' in residential homes where the private sector have reduced quality of care and increased potential for abuse of residents as 'costly' systems of protection, staff training and staffing numbers are reduced. The ultimate impact for this company was withdrawal from the market place, with a short sighted <i>raison d'être</i> within the current economic climate for a quick profit/return on investment.</p>
<p>4. <i>Change in ownership.</i> providing more employee ownership, e.g. co-ops such as John Lewis, share provision as annual bonus payments such as Aviva. There are different kinds of profit sharing and psychological ownership is needed as well as economic ownership in an enterprise is a change requiring careful management, e.g. management buyout of Rover</p>	<p>Local authorities now have a mixed economy of delivery, e.g. through partnership and co-ownership of moral purpose for improved services, although outsourcing for improved outcomes requires a contract management approach and different skills. There has also been the influence of changes in NHS delivery with the commissioner/provider split, although this can lead to increased resources to manage this. The CRTC has potential for developing 'mutuals'</p>

in the West Midlands.	lead by the Cabinet Office, including the concept of co-operatives owned by employees, but with ultimate step of competitive tendering to enable private sector challenge to deliver services.
5. <i>Downsizing</i> : previously both the public and private sectors have experienced growth over a number of years, now it is all about downsizing, to become leaner, smarter and in some cases reducing growth in order to ensure survival and further growth later.	The economic downturn due to national debt now means reducing resources, aligned with the political ethos of reducing local authorities as not efficient bodies, and they should become more business orientated as the best way of achieving value for money. There is cynicism regarding the private sector and big business orientation, with a future market for politicians within private companies on leaving politics, as well as fund-raising for elections give rise to pressure for politicians to support growth of the private sector and their own profits. This is intrinsically linked to a national governments own moral purpose.
6. <i>Changes in culture of the organisation</i> : through mergers, takeovers and combinations of this, where there is management of two cultures and the creation of a third combined leading to issues which are central to the organisation's excellence and ultimately its survival.	Local authorities are facing culture change of different ways of doing their 'business'. Partnerships are not mergers; however some changes have resulted in partial mergers, e.g. the demise of the Local Learning and Skills Councils and the creation of the Young People's Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency through the Adult, Skills and Children's Learning Act (2010). Also the Connexions Service where delivery, contracted by

	regional government moved to local authorities, some continued contracting out to third parties, others merged into the local authority. Currently the NHS reforms where Public Health is moving into local authorities. In addition to the culture changes referred to above local authorities are doing things differently by trying to remove paternalism and reliance on services from the public sector alongside a growing area of change in how to deliver the services that remain.
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As adapted from Beckhard and Harris (1987)

What Beckhard and Harris are advocating for overall is open systems planning as a leadership model which enables leaders to balance sustainability and change for organisations (Beckhard and Harris, 1987). This they cite as a process of analysing a situation, identifying the kind of social and technical environment necessary to operate effectively and developing a strategy for getting there through a seven phase process.

However, the seven phases explored by Beckhard and Harris equate to project management techniques and promote a way of making the complex task of leading transitions in organisational change simple. This I think relates to the

management of change, the implementation of change, and not the leadership of change which is the focus of this research work. The change process is not a linear one, and becomes even more complex when dealing with change on several different fronts at the same time, which is the case when dealing with reducing resources.

## **2.4 Structural Change in Education**

The second area of change could also be viewed as structural reform. At the same time as reducing resources, the Department for Education started to push for what they viewed as systemic change within the education system through the introduction and vigorous promotion of moving schools out of local government 'control' through the Academisation of schools. In contrast to the previous Labour Government the Coalition Government has, and continues to, reduce resources for school improvement which are available to local authorities and has emphasised that schools are responsible for their own improvement. Here the Secretary of State has pushed through early legislation to enable 'failing' schools to be converted through sponsors to academies and also supports good and outstanding schools to form their own academy trust organisation.

However, this in itself does not lead to systemic change, but does lead to structural change, where community, foundation and voluntary aided schools change their structures to reflect what the Government refers to as independent schools managed and financed directly through Whitehall.

There has been much consideration of the changing role of the local authority since the inception of this national policy, including within the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS) Research Interest Group regarding Governance, where theories were put forward that the role of the local education authority was being removed. The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) in its report on children and education gave a brief historical overview to illustrate "that Councils have not directly controlled schools for some time and yet, for over 100 years, despite significant reforms and shifts in policy direction, Councils have continued to exert a strategic leadership role in championing education." (Rogers and Mellish, 2012 p. 8). They go on to state that despite the current Government's ambitious programme of reform, councils do continue to have an invaluable, essential and direct contribution to make to the



success of our schools and education more broadly . (Rogers and Mellish, 2012 p. 8).

SOLACE calls for a whole-system approach explaining that children's experiences outside of schools has a significant impact on their learning and behaviour back in the classroom as well as on the learning, attainment and progress of their peers. In the Education White paper, (HM Government, Department for Education, 2010) the Department for Education states unequivocally that councils have an indispensable role to play as champions of vulnerable children and young people, parents and families, and educational excellence. SOLACE adds a fourth role to these and that is as the champion of relationships (Rogers and Mellish, 2012 p. 8).

The McKinsey Report (2010) argues that the best school systems seem to rely increasingly on a middle tier and refers to it as a mediating tier (cited in Mourshed et al., 2010). This middle tier debate within whole systems reform is picked up and discussed further by Hopkins (in Hopkins, et al., 2011), exploring five phases of whole systems reform to systemically improve education. In phase four of this model Hopkins describes the concern to be able to scale up reforms with the

recognition of a vital role for districts and local education authorities (Hopkins, et al., 2011).

The Association of Directors of Children's Services also look at this middle or mediating tier stating:

"New capacity is being developed through school-to-school support and the growth of chains of schools. They do not have the capacity to replace the roles undertaken by local authorities. The Department for Education cannot manage all schools centrally. A mediating layer is needed." (Association of Directors of Children's Services, 2012 p. 13).

The mediating layer is defined as providing, 'targeted hands-on support for schools' acting 'as communications buffer between the school and the centre' and sharing and integrating 'improvements across schools'. (Mourshed et al., 2010 p. 73).

Hopkins et al (2011) summarises the leadership required as:

**"Systems leadership at the school level** – with school principals almost as concerned about the success of other schools as they are about their own.

**System leadership at local level** – with practical principles widely shared and used as a basis for local alignment so that school diversity, collaboration and segmentation – that all schools are at different stages in the performance cycle on a continuum from 'leading' to 'failing' – are deliberately exploited and specific programmes are developed for the groups at most risk.

**System leadership at the system level** – with social justice, moral purpose and a commitment to the success of every learner providing the focus for transformation."

(Hopkins, et al., 2011 p. 20).

What we are finding is that just as in the 1980's when the previous Conservative government introduced Grant Maintained Schools as a means of removing schools from local authority 'control' to a centralised system, and then moving them back as Foundation Schools in the 1990's, the Government is looking to change the relationship with Academies and Free Schools and the local authorities they reside within. This is evidenced through recent discussions within the consultation process being run by Ofsted in 2013 around the potential of introducing an

inspection regime to test out local authorities' support to schools – commonly viewed as a new LEA inspection, where HMI are clear that the local authority retains responsibilities for all schools with regard to support and challenge for school improvement. Additional evidence is also coming through from the Targeted Basic Need programme where local authorities in England experiencing pressure on school places can bid for funding to:

“... build high quality new schools on their own sites. These must be established as an Academy or Free School via the Academy Presumption arrangements (in February 2012, Schedule 11 of the Education Act 2011 was introduced and this included the ‘presumption’ that local authorities are required to seek proposals to establish an Academy/Free School in the first instance where they identify a need for a new school)” (Ranasinghe, 2013 p. 2).

A key point of the guidance is that local authorities will be deciding between applicants to run the schools. In addition to this there is a further change within the schools building programme. In the early days of the coalition government, a stop was put on the Building Schools for the Future programme and it was made quite clear that all schools building programmes would be dealt with through central

resources developed within the Education Funding Agency. The Targeted Basic Need Programme expects local authorities to coordinate all bids, be they from faith schools, dioceses, Academy chains or individual Academies and then to procure and manage the build programme. It would appear that the Department for Education is already considering the role of local authorities as the mediation or middle tier in whole-systems reform for education.

## **2.5 Reform of Child Protection**

This is the third change which is part of this research project, that of the move from a process focus for child protection to that of a whole-system approach in order to put improvements in place through the work of Munro (2010). This work was requested by the Coalition Government in 2010. In her first report to Government Munro refers to the work of Lord Laming, reporting that:

“Professional practice and judgement, as said by many who contributed evidence to this report, are being compromised by an over-complicated, lengthy and tick-box assessment and recording system. The direct interaction and engagement with children and their families, which is at the core of social work, is said to be at risk as the needs of a work management tool overtake those of evidence-based

assessment, sound analysis and professional judgement about risk of harm.”

(Munro, 2010 p. 6).

Munro went on to discuss the previous reforms which had driven compliance with regulation and rules over time, resulting in social workers ultimately working within a 'tick-box' approach to assessment of children's needs. She then went on to state that a systems approach would help the review in avoiding looking at parts of a system in isolation, enabling the analysis of how the system functions as a whole.

(Munro, 2010).

To understand the form of child protection the work of Seddon will now be discussed to bring more clarity on systems thinking. Seddon (2008) explains the systems view as:

“...to think about the organisation from the outside-in, to understand customer demand and to design a system that meets it.” (Seddon, 2008 p. 70).

He goes on to discuss the need to integrate decision-making with work, so that the workers control the work and the measures used are then derived from that work instead of from arbitrary measures such as targets and standards. Here he states that the management role shifts from a potentially adversarial and hierarchical control to a more complementary way of working on the system. That means that managers work on the things beyond the control of the workers and which affect the system conditions; 'the way the work works'. The consequence, states Seddon, is an adaptive, customer-centric system. "If demand changes, the system changes." (Seddon, 2008 p. 71).

Seddon believes that if you get the flow in the system right, which absorbs the variety of demand, you deliver a better service at lower cost. Measures derived from work keep the work real. Arbitrary targets and measurements of outputs, standards and costs actually increases costs with no real measure of improvements in services as we move to measure process milestones (Seddon, 2008). Munro (2011) in her final report to the Department for Education also alluded to this "undue importance given to performance indicators and targets which provide only part of the picture of practice and which have skewed attention

to process over the quality and effectiveness of help given." (HM Government, 2011 p. 6). She believes that these forces created a defensive system, putting an emphasis on procedures and recording with the result that insufficient attention is given to developing and supporting the expertise of workers so that they can work more effectively with children, young people and their families.

## **2.6 The Development of a Children's Trust Board as an Organisation**

As I explored the literature to develop a model of leadership the need to examine the principles of organisation became more apparent. Furthermore the interrelationship between the research questions relating to leadership and organisation demand the consideration of one alongside the other. The discourse in seeking a leadership model also seeks to answer the question of principles in relation to the organisation within which the leadership is situated. In this case the organisation is that of a public sector operation, which also brings comparisons to the private sector. The following relates to my second sub-question for the research – what principles of organisational development should be harnessed to support such a change?



The word 'organisation' as described in the English (UK) Thesaurus (Mackie, 2002 ) refers to government and groups as an organisation and can also be described as an 'arrangement or configuration'. The Children's Trust arrangement, brought about by statute, is a configuration of a range of organisations or agencies, which as a group constitutes a system of governance to improve outcomes for children, young people and families across a local authority area.

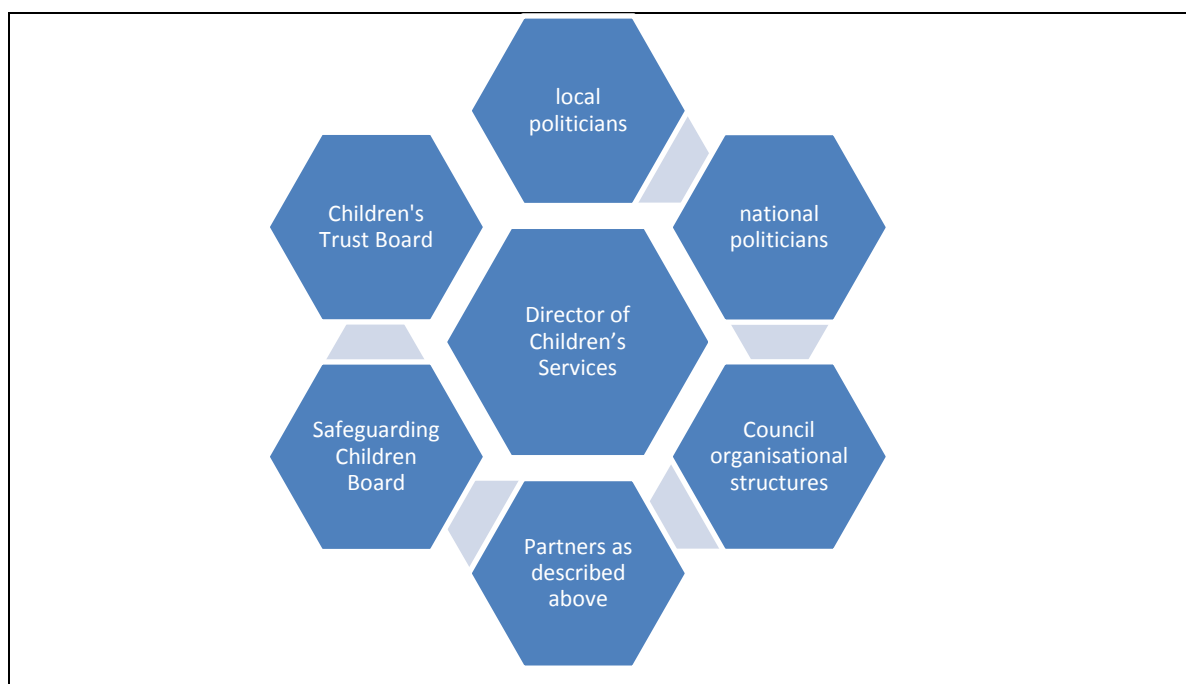
As with all organisational development, a structure beyond the board is needed in order to manage the work and delineate roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. Handy (1993) on understanding organisations explored structures as the linking mechanisms between roles – the coordinating structures of the organisation. He called these basic forms the skeleton of the organisation which needed to be joined by muscles, nerves and flesh if they were going to work. However, he also believed that the decision on the underlying bone structure was the first priority. He felt that the designer of organisational structures needed to tread lightly, "on a tightrope stretched between the pressures of uniformity on the one hand and diversity on the other". (Handy, 1993 p. 255).

Uniformity, states Handy, is the product of the steady state of an organisation. It includes the infrastructure – the accounting system, the secretarial system, the office services section and therefore includes the production within the organisation. The Children's Trust is made up of a range of partners, all separate organisations in their own right, with their own infrastructures and products. This adds a layer of complexity to leadership, management, organisation and decision making.

Hence any work to be achieved by the board must reflect the greater number of aspects which each organisation can share in respect of their service delivery and once a decision is taken to adapt, review or change a way of working to improve a service, decision making must progress through each organisation separately in order to affect that change. In other words without the duty to cooperate and hence the shared goals for 'Every Child Matters' the partnership would struggle to retain its focus and achieve improved outcomes for children, young people and families.

Unable to determine an organisation of unity, and dealing with a range of partners to undertake its business, the Children's Trust Board is more reliant on developing a culture which supports their duty to cooperate. Handy begins his discussion on organisational culture with the exploration of roles, with the particular person we are concerned with in this analysis being referred to as the focal person, which in this case is the Director of Children's Services. Broadly speaking the focal role can be described diagrammatically as shown in figure 2.3 below.

**Figure 2.4: the Role Set of the Director of Children's Services.**



The role descriptions are deliberately placed within hexagonal shapes as they fit together relationship wise as an integral and holistic view of the role of the Director

of Children's Services. As a leader of the overall system this role is a focal point in the context of each hexagonal and is dependent on the relationships within and between each aspect being developed and maintained effectively.

Handy goes onto explore the role expectations of those members of the role set which leads to the role definition and which can be occupationally defined, and sometimes legally so. The definition of role expectations is aided by role signs, a clarity from the role holder regarding her or his role at any given time. A lack of clarity by either the role holder or the role set members leads, Handy asserts, to role ambiguity (Handy, 1993).

Handy asks "Is that bad?" and then answers his own question as "Not necessarily so" (Handy, 1993 (4th edition) p.64)). He believes that the ability to shape one's own role is the freedom desired by many, but that the ambiguity could lead to role stress. The virtue of job descriptions states Handy is that they lessen this role ambiguity (Handy, 1993).

The roles and responsibilities for the Director of Children's Services and the Lead

Member for Children's Services were published by the DCSF (HM Government,

2008). This is statutory guidance which explains the aspects of the law contained in the Children Act (2004) and should act as the basis of the job description for both the Lead Member and the Director when carrying out their duties. The guidance states quite clearly that whilst the Lead Member and the Director of Children's Services are the focus of statutory responsibilities for children's services, the responsibilities, both statutory and non-statutory, are wider.

This means that the Council Leader and the Chief Executive also share responsibilities in this area. Hence the guidance explains the role not only of the Lead Member and the Director of Children's Services, but also explains the role and responsibilities of other more senior leaders (HM Government, 2008). Including the local authority Chief Executives and Council Leaders within the guidance was to ensure that the importance of improving outcomes for children and young people is reflected across the full range of the local authority and the local strategic partnership. As the people for whom the Lead Member and the Director of Children's Services are accountable to they must also share the responsibility for ensuring that the overall partnership working is effective.

The following aspects contained in the job role for a Director of Children's Services in respect of this analysis are the following:

"The Director of Children's Services (DCS) is tasked with improving the well-being of all children and young people in the local area across all five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, and ensuring that outcomes gaps between the most disadvantaged children and their peers are reduced. This can only be achieved through strategic leadership of high quality services in which the local authority and its partners in the Children's Trust work together and focus clearly on the needs of the child, young person and family." (HM Government, 2008)..

The guidance also refers to the Director of Children's Services as a system leader, change maker and professional champion for all children, young people and families in the local authority area. This is alongside the role of orchestrating and leading a wide range of activities, people and agencies, many of which they will not manage directly, in order to achieve a joint local effort to improve outcomes whilst narrowing any gaps for children and young people. It goes on to explain that the role therefore, requires leadership, a child-centred approach, innovation, creative thinking and meticulous use of data and other information.

So, with a clear role description of responsibilities and expectations set down in statute, according to Handy (1993), there should be no role ambiguity. Unless of course the range of partners involved within the Children's Trust Board and multi-agency arrangements, including that of the local authority, resulting from this are not fully aware of the statutory guidance, nor, therefore, of the expected role of the Director of Children's Service nor that of the Lead Member. This is an area I will explore further within my research project.

Handy (1993) goes on to describe other aspects of tensions which he feels can arise within the development and utilisation of roles. These he has defined as:

**Table 2. 2: Role Conflict**

Role Tensions	Description
Role incompatibility	Expectations of the members of the role set are well known but are incompatible as features of the same role.

Role conflict	Arises from the need for a person to carry out more than one role in the same situation – a collection of roles that don't quite fit together.
Role overload	Most people can handle some level of role conflict, however, when the number of roles that one person has to handle becomes too much this results in role overload, which is different to work overload.
Role underload	Here the individual finds that the role definition is out of line with their own self-concept of the role. It is self-perception which causes role underload. Delegation, when first practiced, can lead to feelings of underload.

(Handy, 1993 pp. 65-68)



These potential tensions – role ambiguity, incompatibility, conflict, overload and underload can lead to role stress which can be damaging to the individual as well as the organisation. Dealing with role stress can best be achieved through co-operative strategies - “there is good evidence that close and positive inter-personal relationships with members of one's role set can mitigate substantially the effects of role problems. A given degree of role conflict is experienced as carrying less strain when there are positive relations with the others involved.” (Handy, 1993 p. 70).

However, Handy also asserts that this is not the case for role underload. I will return to role underload later in this chapter when I discuss the differences between the concepts of delegation, distributed leadership and shared leadership.

If the structure of an organisation, supported by role definition of the key player(s) is the skeleton, then the culture of the organisation is the nerve centre. It enables the structure to flex and move the musculature of the member organisations as the sum of the parts which make up the Children's Trust Board.

Drennan explains culture as “how things are done around here” (Drennan, 1992 p.

1) explaining that the repetition of work in ways which keeps employees safe and in

tune with their bosses, becomes 'habits'. These in turn become part of an organisation's personality, giving organisations attitudes, just like people. As in people a company's attitudes show in how they handle themselves – as an organisation, how they handle their business. It is not necessarily reflected in HR manuals, but is developed through what an employee sees their fellow workers doing and what their managers accept as a way of doing things. So Drennan summarises, culture is “how things are done around here”, what is ‘typical’ of the organisation, the habits adopted, the accepted attitudes and the expected behaviours (Drennan, 1992 pp. 1-3) In understanding where culture comes from Drennan explores a range of influences and then refers to them as twelve key causal factors:

**Table 2. 3: Causal Factors for Organisational Culture taken from (Drennan, 1992 pp. 5-28)**

Causal Factor	Brief Overview
1. Influence of a Dominant Leader	A dominant leader can affect a company's way of doing things, but this only lasts as long as that presence is in the company. Succeeding leaders and managers tend to continue with it and

	<p>develop it so that over the years it becomes a part of the organisation's personality.</p>
2. Company History and Tradition	<p>History and tradition can be a major factor in the culture of many organisations. Employees in the business remember how it was and have long memories for this. It is the ways in which employees have felt safe and secure and is not given up easily.</p>
3. Technology, Products and Services	<p>The work they do, the products or services they deliver to customers has a major effect on the shape of an organisation's culture. As technology develops it is embraced by the younger employees, even if they may regret the loss of old skills later. This is the way of culture, it provides a comforting</p>

	<p>framework of structure and continuity, adapting gradually over time to absorb new ways of working, giving both continuity and renewal.</p>
4. The Industry and its Competition	<p>For some industries rapid change and constant product innovations by competitors is normal and therefore has become part of the culture. In other industries, where a pattern of work has for years remained largely unaltered, where businesses are large and enjoy near monopoly conditions, changing culture becomes a much more traumatic process.</p>
5. Customers	<p>Customers shape business culture in different ways. If an organisation has one major customer they tend to listen very intently to their needs. Customers</p>

	<p>also loom large in an organisation's consciousness where clients can simply move their business if they do not like what they are getting.</p>
6. Company Expectations	<p>People are generally conditioned in childhood to conform with the expectations of authority – parents, teachers etc. – and it is no different when entering the world of work.</p> <p>Within an organisation the expectations of behaviour are identified and reinforced by managers and colleagues.</p> <p>Organisations get no more than the behaviour they have come to accept, and what they accept becomes, in large part, their culture.</p>
7. Information and Control Systems	<p>Computer information and control systems can radically change the</p>

	<p>operating culture of any company, for good or ill, and disruption, morale problems and contorting complexity are the penalties of rushed introductions.</p>
8. Legislation and Company Environment	<p>In many cases, corporations have developed core philosophies which apply across continents, but inevitably the legislation and the culture of the environments in which they operate have material effects on how the philosophies are actually carried through in practice.</p>
9. Procedures and Policies	<p>Company procedures and policies are necessary as guidelines to help employees do a consistently good job for their company, but when they are implemented rigidly they deprive employees of the authority to act</p>

	<p>promptly in difficult situations and imply a lack of confidence that the employees can do a good job. On the one hand the procedures and policies of any organisation have a prime role in shaping its culture, while on the other they can be the major source of employee frustration and alienation.</p>
10. Rewards Systems and Measurement	<p>Companies generally measure what is important to them, for example, sales, costs, profit, market share, return on capital, output, and quality. When you measure and reward it, the whole organisation takes a different attitude towards it.</p>
11. Organisation and Resources	<p>The people who live within an organisation adapt their behaviour to cope with the structures and constraints</p>

	they have until it becomes part of the normal way of doing things, a part of the culture.
12. Goals, Values and Beliefs	The goals a company sets and the values it truly believes in have more influence in transforming company culture than any other factor. The goals are the true engine of change and excellence.

However Linstead, et al., (2009) felt that the results, taken out of context, are just partial descriptions and can be confused. Some of the causal factors are environmental and others could be considered as components of corporate culture. Only item 12 could be considered as being part of an organisational culture (Linstead, et al., 2009). Linstead goes on to explain that:

“Culture is not, as in Drennan's functionalist approach, about the content of causal chains; on the contrary it is about how factors that may or may not occur within causal chains are interpreted and become meaningful in the



context of social action by members of the organisation." (Linstead, et al., 2009 p. 155).

At this point I am unsure as to whether these are indeed causal chains in relation to the culture of an organisation, they can be viewed as influencing factors and as such are open to the interpretation that Linstead refers to and these functions in action within the social environment of an organisation leads to the development of organisational culture. Function without action leads to a dormant organisation, it is only when individual members interpret these functions and take action to implement this interpretation that a culture is developed.

Handy (1993) refers to cultures in organisations as a set of values, norms and beliefs and then explores this further through reference to organisation ideologies which would draw upon the functional forms as denoted by Drennan (1992).

Handy believes that cultures are founded and built over the years, through the dominant groups in an organisation referring to tribal traditions reinforced by private language. Within that context Handy cites four main types of culture –those of power, role, task and person, all of these rely on social action undertaken by

people and most effectively through individuals taking on a leadership role (Handy, 1993 p. 183).

## 2.7 Leading change in Children's Services

This section attempts to draw out ideas around tools and systems and addresses the third sub-question for my research: how can leaders develop tools and systems to anchor services in continuous improvement when the organisation is embroiled within a process of change arising from changes in national policy as well as a reduction in resources? I have begun to refer to some parts of this area in earlier discussions on developing a model for leadership.

The role of the Director of Children's Services is described in statute (Children Act, 2004) and describes this as a system leader, change maker, and professional champion for all children, young people and families within a local authority area.

The three areas of research context can all be explored further within the systems thinking framework; however the discourse here does reinforce the complexity of

change facing local authorities and particularly in the area of children's services.

National Government defines the role for leading children's services as that of a champion for children, young people and families in order to promote the well-being of children for the future building of society. Rogers promotes this approach in response to national policy for the Academisation of schools (Rogers, et al., 2012). Alongside this Munro (2010) promotes the systems thinking approach in order to ensure that the whole system is led through a process of change in order to improve outcomes for all children and young people (Munro, 2010).

Through the Children's Trust arrangements other agencies and partners are drawn into the system to enable the holistic approach for the promotion of well-being which takes leadership into the arena of symbolic authority: leading by what you do, rather than what you say. After all a leader of Children's Services does not hold executive authority within the Children's Trust arena.

It is proposed that in the early days of development for the Children's Trust partnership there is a reliance on transactional leadership where relationships are being developed. There is a reliance on 'trade-off' to develop and improve

outcomes for children, young people and their families. Some of these trade-offs would have included various levels of pooled resources and in some cases even pooled budgets, enabled through Section 75 of the Health Act (1998) (HM Government, 1998). It was in these early days of relationship building across partnerships that the moral purpose, referred to by Michael Fullan (Fullan, 2001), was developed and strengthened.

As the Children's Trust developed, relationships were formed between the varying partners and their organisations, including those across the local authority.

Knowledge- making and sharing took place alongside coherence making as new policies and ways of working were developed. As the work develops a step change of improvement takes place regarding the outcomes for children and young people and the understanding of change grows, within a growing complexity as organisations and agency interact and change themselves from within.

However, within the context of major change(reducing resources, changing educational structures and further work to improve child protection) the work becomes even more complex, change processes begin to overlap and the pace of

demand increases. Within a systems approach this leads to leadership working on the edge of a chaotic change process, which Fullan believes is the most creative space to occupy (Fullan, 2001). What is required now is transformational leadership leading to the deep change of Quinn, (Quinn, 1996), but this also needs to be shared leadership in order to engage with and work alongside other leaders, including staff, and the public, within the system.

In order to ensure that leading on the edge of chaos perspective for change engenders manageable stress loads, working in stress as opposed to working in distress, leaders must look to how they can make the complex simple or seek 'Simplexity' which was initially described by Jeffrey Kluger in 2008 (Kluger, 2008). Fullan (2011) describes this as 'where nothing is left to chance' (Fullan, 2011).

Finally, there must be leadership within the local authority and beyond. The Director of Children's Services must have cognisance of national and local politics, national in terms of legislature and local in terms of policy making.

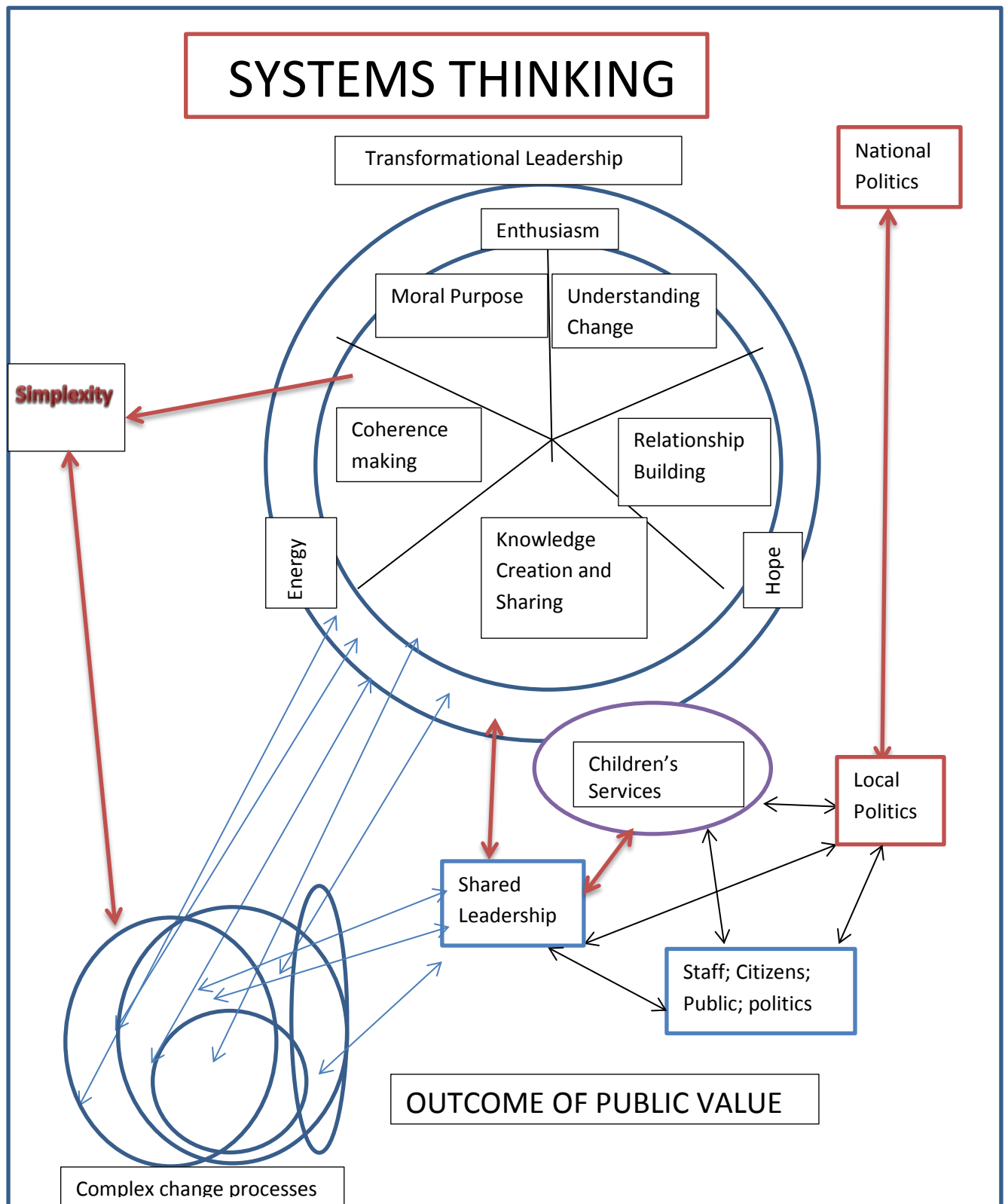
A simplification for many researchers is a tendency to focus on one person as the leader, however, within the complex system of Children's Services there is more than one leader in place. This moves leadership away from the comfort of control and command as in transactional leadership, towards the dynamic of transformational leadership, with leaders supporting each other in different parts and at different levels within the overall structure of the organisations involved. To move away from a feeling of control and step into the abyss of the unknown takes courageous leadership (Heifetz, 1994); this has the potential of transforming self as well as the system (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Thus, public value may be an outcome as Brookes and Grint (2010) state but the worth of that public value can only be born in moral purpose and that moral purpose must be shared with others on the journey with you. So, to succeed in the long run, a leader must develop relationships which ground everyone with the same moral purpose.

This is brought together in Figure 2.7 below as a model for leading change in Children's Services, with recognition of the work of Michael Fullan. It is this model

of transformational leadership within whole-systems reform that the research will draw on and develop.

Figure 2 5: Model for Leading Change in Children's Services





The model reflects the leadership drawn from a variety of literature on the object of leading change. It draws from the overall concept of systems thinking in order to retain the focus on the whole system of children's services in that the complexities involved in leading a range of services across and within different organisations requires a systems approach to designing and leading services with clarity about the relationship between purpose, measures and method (Dunford, 2012; Fullan, 2011; Hopkins, et al., 2011; Mourshed, 2010; Seddon, 2008; and Weinberg, 2011).

On the conception of children's services as an organisation within the local authority, alongside the development of the larger conglomerate of the Children's Trust and the Local Safeguarding Board, change was focused through transactional leadership in order to undertake organisational development (Beckhard and Harris, 1987; Drennan, 1992; Gallos, 2006; Handy, 1993; Senge, 2006; and Linstead, et al., 2009) and the step change requirements in response to the Children's Act (HM Government, 2004). However, for the complex change requirements being explored through this research transformational leadership is required to make deeper and long lasting change within organisations (Boss and Riggio, 2006; Burns 1978 and 2003; Brooks and Grint, 2010; Fullan, 2001; and Quinn, 1996 and 2004).

Central to the leadership role is that taken from Fullan (2001) – a mind-set giving a framework thinking about and leading complex change more powerfully with five components of leadership representing independent but mutually reinforcing forces for positive change. In summary, moral purpose means acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole. It is essential that leaders understand the change process in order to interact positively with it. By building and maintaining relationships, effective leaders constantly foster purposeful interaction and problem solving and are wary of easy consensus. They should show a commitment to generate and increase knowledge constantly both inside and outside the organisation.

Coherence-making supports the leader to extract valuable patterns worth retaining, and also ensures that a leader can make sense of and articulate clearly the various concepts at work within the leadership of change (Fullan, 2001 pp. 3-7). This coherence making is also supported by the concept of 'Simplexity' where leaders are required to make the complex simple in order to support others in their own coherence making (Kluger, 2008).

The overlapping circles in the bottom left hand corner depict the rather messy cycles of change which within this complex arena overlap. The clear lines of arrows show the inter-relationships on the central five components and personal characteristics of the transformational change leader who is now leading on the edge of chaos. This through the stronger arrow draws our attention to the need to develop Simplicity in order to support the coherence making required for pattern recognition and understanding, with verbalisation, in order to understand the needs of change.

These five components are supported by the interaction of three more personal characteristics of *energy*, *enthusiasm* and *hopefulness* as a constellation with a reciprocal relationship between the two sets. (Fullan, 2001 p. 7).

The Children's Services overlaps with the five components of leadership and is a summary title depicting the organisational development requirements for the three organisations that the leadership is concerned about - that of the services within the local authority, the Children's Trust arrangements and the Local Safeguarding body. This also has an interaction with staff and citizens residing within the local

authority area, the public more generally who work and play within the area and the politics that are generated from the plurality of any such society, with competing needs and views of needs and the resultant solutions to these. This group also interacts within the shared leadership concepts, where others are able to demonstrate leadership in their own right which is not the distributed leadership which necessarily shares the same goals instead it recognises an independence from the organisations and yet can impact both negatively and positively upon them.

The concept of shared leadership also impacts to a greater extent on the five components of leadership recognising the idea that the change leader works across organisations and agencies which make up the sum of the parts engaged in children's services (see figure 2.2).

Alongside this is the recognition that there are influences of both national and local Politics (the capital 'P' is deliberate here as it refers to party politics as opposed to personal politics, which are different dynamics with different impacts). This refers to the politics of national government developing legislation and policy which has a

'top down' effect on local authorities. As well as In addition, the expectations on them also impact on the democratic system of elected local politicians which form the administration for a local authority. These national and local Politics can also be in opposition to each other in terms of ethos and direction but as locally elected politicians they are influenced in turn by the staff, citizens, public and the plurality of the local society. This has to be balanced within the operation of the local authority who must attempt to meet the local needs. The larger arrow between national politics and local politics reflects the strength of relationship between the two in respect of legislative requirements which encompasses the threat of punitive measures should a local authority not meet the requirements of national government.

All of this results in the overall outcome of achieving public value in terms of meeting local needs in effective and efficient ways and this being felt as a positive experience by the electorate within the local authority area.

## 2.8 Conclusions from the Literature for the Research Questions

So what does the literature tell us about the research questions so far? This section reflects on the questions developed for the research project and explores what data the literature review can offer in response to these.

The overall question for the research to consider is:

When legislation and policy is given in a top down manner with guidance for implementation what is the role of local leadership – is it organisational development, the development of systems, or just managing in an arena of change: when the change is complex and demanding time wise, how do leaders deal with the transformation required?

This overarching question was broken down into more focused questions in order to make the research more manageable:

1. What leadership model can be developed to deal with a complexity of change to achieve positive outcomes?
2. What principles of leadership and organisational development should be harnessed to support such a change?

3. How can leaders develop tools and systems to anchor services in continuous improvement when the organisation is embroiled within a process of change arising from changes in national policy as well as a reduction in resources?
4. What are the common and divergent experiences, priorities, rewards, challenges and themes of leading change?

The following section looks at these sub-questions in order to identify how the literature review findings have begun to illuminate the potential of the overall findings.

### **2.8.1 What leadership model can be developed to deal with a complexity of change to achieve positive outcomes?**

I have used the literature review to explore the step change required to implement the developments of relevant legislation and statutory guidance arising from the Children Act (HM Government 2004); the Education and Inspection Act (2006) (HM Government, 2006); the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) (HM Government 2010a) and the Academy Act (HM Government 2010b). I also looked at the expectations arising from this top down approach of legislative requirements. Using this as the background I also explored the three specific

areas of concern which, I feel, adds complexity and speed to the requirement for change. I began to look at this through an organisation development perspective, exploring the works of Beckhard and Harris, 1987; Drennan, 1992; Gallos. 2006; Linstead, et al., 2009; Handy, 1993 and Senge, 2006 which discussed the structure, role stresses and organisational culture which affects the leadership of change.

Here I ascertained that developing the structures and engaging with other organisations and agencies was integral to developing the three organisations which the change leaders would need to engage with. The clarity of the statutory guidance depicting the role of the Director of Children's Services, the Lead Member for Children's Services as well as the role to be played by the Leader of the Council alongside the Chief Executive supported the leadership to deal with role ambiguity and other areas which could lead to role stress. This I felt was important to the organisational development which needed to be delivered in order to achieve the changes required within the different and developing organisations which the legislation focused upon. Equally important was the development of the cultures within these organisations, which was directly impacted upon through the leadership roles being enacted. Here it was clear from the guidance that the



leadership of the local authority and the Children's Trust arrangements were intended to carry out the key roles of leadership as a system leader, change maker, professional champion for all children, young people and families in the local authority area. This was alongside the role of orchestrating and leading a wide range of activities, people and agencies, many of which they will not manage directly, in order to achieve a joint local effort to improve outcomes, narrowing any gaps for children and young people (HM Government, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008).

This description of roles and responsibilities led me to explore the systems thinking models of leadership from Dunford, 2012; Fullan, 2011a; Hopkins, et al., 2011; Seddon, 2008; and Weinberg, 2011. This I concluded was a central concept to the leadership of change with the wider arena of children's services and one which gives a clear framework for the developing model on the leadership of change within the context of the research questions. To take this systems view leads to thinking about an organisation from the outside-in, to understand customer demand to design a system that meets it. This reflects the child-centred approach for delivering children's services.

I then explored transactional and transformational leadership concluding that for the complex change arena, transformational change was required in order to respond to legislative demands within the areas of complex change I had identified. This brought me back to Fullan (2001) and the five components of leadership – moral purpose; understanding change; relationship building; knowledge creation and sharing; and coherence making, alongside the three personal characteristics of effective leaders – enthusiasm, hope and energy.

Drawing on the work of Brooks and Grint (2010) enabled me to look at the expectations of the challenges inherent in public leadership. I started to examine the tensions wrought between local and national governance and party politics, with its engagement with community and the overall outcome of public value. That was within the achievement of the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes for children and young people in order to promote and achieve their overall well-being.

All of these reflections enabled the development of a model for the leadership of change within children's services which is depicted in figure 2.7 above. Hence a

model for the leadership of change has been developed through the literature that has been reviewed in this chapter; however, this model needs to be tested against the analysis of the research data.

### **2.8.2 What principles of leadership and organisational development should be harnessed to support such a change?**

The emerging principles of leadership and organisational development arising from the literature review included the need for clear role definition in order to avoid role ambiguity and role stress, an organisational culture which promotes and enables transformational leadership within the change arena, as well as the five leadership components and the three personal characteristics of effective leadership. In order to be effective in complex times leaders must be guided by moral purpose. This calls directly to the authentic leader for transformational change required to meet the needs of reducing resources and changed ways of working. It is essential for leaders to understand the change process and in so doing, alongside a healthy respect for the complexities of change, leads to greater success and a deepening of moral purpose. Relationship building is just as important as a principle of

leadership and organisational development where effective leaders constantly foster purposeful interaction and problem solving and are wary of easy consensus.

Effective knowledge creation and sharing is dependent on the previous three principles and effective leaders commit themselves to constantly increase knowledge inside and outside the organisation. The act of sharing that knowledge is through the relationships developed and instigated within the change process itself. Complexity keeps leaders on the edge of chaos, where creativity resides. This means that effective leaders tolerate enough ambiguity to keep creativity alive, as well as seeking coherence. This coherence is a perennial pursuit enabling leaders to deal with the disequilibrium inherent within complex change (Fullan, 2001).

Further to this the principle of coherence making lead to the exploration of the literature on Simplexity developed by Kluger (2008) where analysis assists individuals to look at the complex and make it simple, enabling the coherence making to be shared more easily across the various relationships.

### **2.8.3 How can leaders develop tools and systems to anchor services in continuous improvement when the organisation is embroiled within a process of change arising from changes in national policy as well as a reduction in resources?**

What is emerging from the literature I have looked at is that of systems thinking, where leaders must take cognizance of the whole system. Therefore this relates to when a system is reviewed in order to promote improvement, thought must be given to the wider system of which it is a part. It relates to the movement between transactional work and transformational work. As the work progresses stronger relationships are formed which enable the leadership functions of knowledge making and sharing to form further coherence making and a shared leadership approach.

Relationship building in the context of working together across and between a number of organisations grows in importance. It is through this process that leadership can move from that of transactional work between partners towards a transformational approach across the whole system. Furthermore through the development of shared goals and moral purpose, leadership can move to that of

equal leaders in a system. This shifts the role of leaders to that of shared leadership and partners striving to achieve a common end, that of improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The tools and the systems utilised by leaders become part of the leadership role that they must perform in a courageous manner, often stepping outside of what has previously been their own comfort zones. As Bass (2006) posits, this has the potential of transforming self as well as the system.

The above are the emerging principles from the literature and these will be compared and contrasted within the analysis of the data from the research work.

The final of the four focused questions for the research to explore is:

4. What are the common and divergent experiences, priorities, rewards, challenges and themes of leading change?

This is inherent within the work being undertaken in the case study area and will therefore be explored fully within the data collection arising from the research design.

# 3

## Research Design

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### 3.1 Introduction

On the premise that research is a journey and therefore needs to be understood with regard to how decisions were made relating to the research project, this chapter will locate the research in a theoretical framework within the qualitative paradigm and discuss the philosophical stance for ontology, the claims or assumptions that are made about the social reality the research is situated within, and epistemology, the claims or assumptions made about possible ways of gaining knowledge of that social reality. (Blaikie, 2000). The research design utilises some of the design framework from Blaikie (2000) whilst drawing from other works by Robson (2002) as well as Denzin and Lincoln (1998). This detailed account of the management of the research processes should enable the reader to identify the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of this research. (Cohen, et al., 2000) and (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

This chapter takes the reader through defining the research topic which gives the focus to the research inquiry and then reduces the scope through developing the research questions. It is from this focus and scope that the research design is fashioned.

The research topic has been defined from the personal interests of the researcher as a research practitioner, (Robson, 2002) having worked in the public sector since 1990, observing and experiencing the difficulty of leadership grappling with change agendas. However, building on personal interests can also bring a bias to the research even though this experiential knowledge can be built upon enabling the researcher to capitalise profitably on their own background (Robson, 2002). In order to counter this it is necessary to examine the assumptions and values being brought by the researcher to the research and this has been done by using an 'experience memo' based on the 'researcher identity memo' (Joseph, 2009). This is detailed later in the chapter alongside the ethical approach I have used in undertaking my research work.



### 3.2 The Research Topic

A great deal has been written about leadership; however the focus has mainly been on individual leadership in the private sector. Leadership within a local authority, a public body, has its own uniqueness, acting as the middle tier for national policy, yet managed by local politics which may or may not be of the same political persuasion as the national government of the time. Some work was undertaken previously by the Labour Government, through think tanks engaged by Tony Blair, looking at new public management and new public leadership; however this focused on the leadership and administration of the civil service, national government servant leadership relating to ministers and their portfolios (Brookes and Grint, 2010).

The Labour Government also promoted and funded leadership learning in response to the Children Act (2004) through the expansion of the work of the National College for School Leadership with a focus on the integration work required to bring the areas of educational leadership and children's social care together. This again was based on individual leadership with a focus on step change to achieve improved outcomes for children, young people and families (Heifetz, 2002).

This research will contribute to knowledge through its focus on complex change and a leadership which incorporates shared leadership across the local authority and beyond with a systems reform approach in response to the major changes introduced by the coalition government led by David Cameron. The research is also located within the public sector at a time when national politics applauds the perceived worth of the private sector as a solution to achieving public value, leading to a political ethos which works to undermine and reduce local authorities as physical organisations and perhaps even as influencing organisations.

### 3.3 The Research Questions

The research has been designed to answer the following broad question:

When legislation and policy is given in a top down manner with guidance for implementation what is the role of local leadership – is it organisational development, the development of systems, or just managing in an arena of change: when the change is complex and demanding time wise, how do leaders deal with the transformation required?

This overarching question has been broken down into more focused questions in order to make the research more manageable:

1. What leadership model can be developed to deal with a complexity of change to achieve positive outcomes?
2. What principles of organisation should be harnessed to support such a change?
3. How can leaders develop tools and systems to anchor services in continuous improvement when the organisation is embroiled within a process of change arising from changes in national policy as well as a reduction in resources?
4. What are the common and divergent experiences, priorities, rewards, challenges and themes of leading change?

The purpose is to explore and understand the phenomena of leadership in practice.

The initial exploration was undertaken through the literature review focusing on

organisational development, systems reform and transformational leadership,

concluding with a leadership model which transcends individual leadership,

enables leaders to search for Simplexity within complex change, to reform systems

within the local and national arena of Politics and public value. The literature

review served as a background resource rather than the starting point for the research design.

### **3.4 The Research Strategy**

The role of the researcher within this project is that of reflective partner, but not in the interpretation of feminist for the emancipation of the participants from oppression as described by Blaikie (2000) but within the interpretive genre which arises from the anti-positivist social scientist. (Cohen, et al., 2000). This means beginning with individuals and attempting to understand their interpretations of the world around them. Theory then becomes more emergent and should be 'grounded' on the data generated by the research. (Cohen, et al., 2000).

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) compare the interpretive paradigms through the following table:

Table 3. 1: Interpretive Paradigms (Denzin, et al., 1998).

<i>Paradigm/Theory</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Form of Theory</i>	<i>Type of Narration</i>
Positivist/postpositivist	Internal, external validity	Logical-deductive, scientific, grounded	Scientific report
Constructivist	Trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, confirmability	Substantive-formal	Interpretive case studies, ethnographic fiction
Feminist	Afrocentric, lived experience, dialogue, caring accountability, race, class, gender, reflexivity, praxis, emotion, concrete grounding	Critical, standpoint	Essays, stories, experimental writing
Ethnic	Afrocentric, lived experience, dialogue, caring, accountability, race, class, gender	Standpoint, critical, historical	Essays, fables, dramas
Marxist	Emancipatory theory, falsifiable,	Critical, historical, economic	Historical, economic,

	dialectical, race, class, gender		sociocultural analysis
Cultural studies	Cultural practices, praxis, social texts, subjectivities	Social criticism	Cultural theory as criticism

From this table constructivism has the greater resonance where “researchers as heirs to the relativist tradition, have grave difficulties with the notion of an objective reality which can be known. They consider that the task of the researcher is to *“understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge.”* (Robson, 2002).

In his discussion of strategies for answering research questions Blaikie (2000) explores four research strategies – those of inductive, deductive, retroductive and abductive. The table below explores the logic of these research strategies:

**Table 3. 2: Research Strategies (Blaikie, 2000 p. 101)**

	<b>Inductive</b>	<b>Deductive</b>	<b>Retroductive</b>	<b>Abductive</b>
<b>Aim</b>	To establish universal generalisations to be used as patterns explanations	To test theories to eliminate false ones and corroborate the survivor	To discover underlying mechanisms to explain observed regularities	To describe and understand social life in terms of social actors' motives and accounts
<b>From</b>	Accumulate observations or data  Produce generalisations	Borrow or construct a theory and express it as an argument  Deduct hypotheses	Document and model regularity  Construct a hypothetical model of a mechanism	Discover everyday lay concepts, meanings and motives  Produce a technical account from lay accounts
<b>To</b>	Use of these 'laws' as patterns to explain further observations	Test the hypotheses by matching them with data	Find the real mechanism by observation and/or experiment	Develop a theory and test it iteratively

The abductive strategy is constructivist and has some overlap with interpretivism.

It is peculiar to social science and has ontological assumptions of a view of social

reality as social constructions through social actors. For the social researcher knowledge of this reality is 'immersion' in it. (Blaikie, 2000). When looking at the development of concepts, theories, hypotheses and models using an abductive strategy Blaikie (2000) explains the abductive strategy as one where the process is "the means, by which the researcher assembles lay accounts of the phenomenon in question, with all their gaps and deficiencies, and, in an iterative manner, begins to construct their own account." (Blaikie, 2000 p. 181).

In this research design the use of language such as 'lay account' can lead to some potential confusion. Leadership as a metanarrative is usually shrouded in an area of 'profession' in that it is usual for the leader to have some knowledge and background in the construct which is the subject of that leadership. This hardly leads to a 'lay account' where the definition of this is that of a non-professional involvement in that particular field. However, if the 'lay account' is in reference to everyday concepts, meanings or accounts, the language used becomes more comfortable and enables the researcher to apply such terminology within the concept of a professional field.



Blaikie (2000) also states that the abductive strategy, whilst being specific to social science research is very rarely used and has a need for the researcher to immerse themselves in the specific social world, with periods of withdrawal for reflection and analysis. From the literature review I consider that Fullan (2001: 2008: 2010: 2011a: 2013) uses abductive strategy in his development of theory and models of leadership, immersing himself in the social world of educational leadership with periods of withdrawal for reflection and analysis. As a practitioner researcher, as opposed to the consultancy researcher of Fullan, time and energy need to be built into the research design to enable these periods of withdrawal, if only for shorter periods of time than would be expected by the above narrative, in order to reflect and analyse the findings as they develop: not an easy task, but a deliberate task which has been factored in to the research design.

The abductive strategy has epistemological assumptions which have a great deal in common with the constructivist view of a social reality which is socially constructed. Knowledge of this reality is produced by immersion in it, leading to a flexible research design giving rise to qualitative data. (Robson, 2002)

Robson (2002) explores designing research from within a fixed design using an experimental strategy and quantitative research, comparing this with the flexible design which is best suited to qualitative research. Within the traditional flexible design research strategy Robson (2002) cites three strategies which are reproduced in table three below.

**Table 3. 3: Flexible Design Research Strategies (Robson, 2002 p. 178)**

Three traditional flexible design research strategies
<p><b><i>Case Study:</i></b></p> <p><i>Development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single 'case', or of a small number of related 'cases'.</i></p> <p>The details of the design typically 'emerge' during data collection and analysis.</p> <p><i>Typical features:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of a single case (or a small number of related cases) of a situation, individual or group of interest or concern;</li> <li>• Study of the case in its context;</li> <li>• Collection of information via a range of data collection techniques including observation, interview and documentary analysis.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Ethnographic study:</i></b></p> <p><i>Seeks to capture, interpret and explain how a group, organisation or community live, experience and make sense of their lives and their world.</i></p> <p>It typically tries to answer questions about specific groups of people, or about specific aspects of the life of a particular group.</p>

*Typical features:*

- Selection of a group, organisation or community of interest or concern;
- Immersion of the researcher in that setting;
- Use of participant observation.

***Grounded Theory study:***

*The central aim is to generate theory from data collected during the study.*

Particularly useful in new, applied areas where there is a lack of theory and concepts to describe and explain what is going on. Data collection, analysis and theory development and testing are interspersed throughout the study.

*Typical features:*

- Applicable to a wide variety of phenomena;
- Commonly interview-based;
- A systematic but flexible research strategy which provides detailed prescriptions for data analysis and theory generation.

This research project involving flexible design does focus on a particular 'case', in terms of one local authority and the leadership roles within it, developing detailed and intensive knowledge in one context or a single case. However, as it also focuses on a group of people and an organisation and on specific aspects of the social construct of leadership, it could be determined as an ethnographic approach. The social construction and abductive strategy could lead towards a grounded theory study with the generation of theory from data collected and analysed within the study. In reality the flexible design of this research is led through its questions to a case study design, since it does draw in a limited way on

the approaches within an ethnographic approach in that it has a focus on a specific group of people within an organisation. However, I do not believe that it meets the criteria of an ethnographic approach. But it does reflect some aspects of grounded theory approach, though for the purposes of this design the focus is that of a case study.

In summary then, the research strategy is based on the role of the researcher as a practitioner researcher, a reflective partner within the ontology and epistemology of interpretivism, overlapped with constructivism using abductive strategy in its approach: a case study in design.

The research questions this thesis explores lead to a qualitative research methodology such as a case study. Yin (2009) defines a case study as "a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". (Yin, 2009 p. 18).

Robson (2002) takes this further and goes on to cite what he believes are the important points of a case study:

- a *strategy*, i.e. a stance or approach, rather than a method, such as observation or interview;
- concerned with *research*, taken in a broad sense and including, for example, evaluation;
- *empirical* in the sense of relying on the collection of evidence about what is going on;
- about the *particular*: a study of that specific case (the issue of what kind of generalisation is possible from the case, and of how this might be done, will concern us greatly);
- focused on a *phenomenon in context*, typically in situations where the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is not clear; and
- undertaken using *multiple methods* of evidence or data collection. (Robson, 2002).

My case study is all of these. It is a strategy or approach to the research; it is not the research instrument to undertake the study. The case study is the design for the research project. It is concerned with the broader sense of research and uses abductive theory to support analysis. As such it is also concerned with whether generalisation can be drawn from it. It is empirical, relying as it does on the collection of evidence on what is going on, there and then in that instance. It is a particular case, looking at leadership and change in the context of children's services and in one local authority. Indeed, it is focused on the specific phenomenon in context – leading on the edge of chaos and has been undertaken using multiple methods of evidence and data collection.

### 3.5 Type of Case Study

Helen Simons (2009) looks at various types of case study and these are analysed below in table 1.3. Research does not always fit purely within one arena of study, hence the type of case study this project uses is a mixture of a *collective* case study, where several cases are studied to form a collective understanding of the issue of leadership and change. Yet it is theory-led, exploring a case through a

particular theoretical perspective, in this instance that of 'leading on the edge of chaos' (Murphy and Murphy, 2002).

A case study in itself is useful for exploring and understanding the process and dynamics of change. Through detailed description, documentation and interpretation, this study attempts to determine the factors that were critical to the leadership of change as they unfolded in a real life setting.

**Table 3. 4.: An Analysis of Various Types of Case Study (Simons, 2009).**

Category of case study	Descriptions
Intrinsic	Studied for the intrinsic interest in the case itself
Instrumental	Where a case study is chosen to explore an issue or research question determined on some other ground, i.e. the case is chosen to gain insight or understanding into something else

Collective	Where several cases are studied to form a collective understanding of the issue or question
Explanatory	To explain the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies
Theory-led	Exploring or exemplifying a case through a particular theoretical perspective
Theory-generated	Generating theory arising from the data itself, through grounded theory; constructivist grounded theory or some other interpretative lens that lead to an eventual theory of the case
Evaluation	Needs to be responsive to multiple stakeholder and audience information needs and maintain effective



	negotiations with key participant throughout the process
Ethnographic	Has its origins in anthropological or sociological tradition

Using Simon's (2009) analysis above, this case study is intrinsic, in so far as it is studied for the interest in the case itself. It is collective in that I research and analyse several cases of leadership in order to gain an understanding of the wider issue of leading change within a local authority. It seeks to generate theory, rather than test theory, although the literature review helps to inform the theory on which the research is based. However the analysis is undertaken whilst attempting to remain objective and in some way retaining no commitment to previously developed constructs and theories of leadership.

It is not instrumental in that the research does not seek to gain insight in to something other than the leadership of change. It is not explanatory in that it does not seek to develop and explain causal links, but it does seek to explore the social

construct of leadership. Neither is it ethnographic in its approach as it does not have as its tradition any anthropological exploration.

### **3.6 Developing the Case Study**

Having looked at and refined my research questions overtime, leading me to a case study design, this section focuses on how the case study was developed, the methods of inquiry used and the approach taken for the analysis.

This case study is what Thomas (2011) refers to as a 'local case'. This is not to say that it is geographically local to the researcher, but that the case has started from the personal or special knowledge of the researcher which they have found interesting and which has sparked their curiosity in a way which has enabled a project to be developed into a research interest (Thomas, 2011). As such it is an intrinsic case study where a topic is being studied purely for its interest to the researcher.

Its purpose is exploratory in that the researcher wished to explore the issue of leading complex change from a range of perspectives, developing understanding not of individual leadership but of how leadership through interaction within a team of leaders can work through organisational development and systems thinking to lead complex change.

The research tested theory through the analysis of the data and made comparisons with insights gained in the literature review, but it also built on theory through the initial analysis of data through reflection by the researcher.

It is a single case study, giving a snapshot of leading complex change over a short period of time. It is geographically bounded through the focus on one local authority, the leadership within it and children's services particularly.

### **3.7 Methods and Management**

This section of the research design chapter gives an account of the methods used and the management of the research work. It specifically addresses access

issues, interview scheduling, conducting the interviews, tape recording, the gathering of empirical evidence and other data which is brought to bear for the overall analysis.

The main data collection method was that of interviews with particular leaders within one local authority and includes local elected members, the corporate management team and a selection of second and third tier managers. The selection of second and third tier managers focused on those that are directly involved in leading Children's Services alongside others who were tasked with leading aspects of corporate change, including organisational development. This has resulted in ten interviews at a corporate level, including politicians and a further eight interviews at the second and third tiers of management. A total of nineteen interviews were undertaken overall.

Data has also included minutes and reports from a range of meetings, including areas of change and corporate management. Information has also been collected through a Freedom of Information request from national government, developing and reviewed guidance on policy and legislation as well as information

from correspondence from other agencies such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate in the form of Ofsted.

Documentary evidence was collected and coded (appendix eight). I focused on minutes and reports from the case study area in order to triangulate evidence of decision making and leadership roles. Data was also drawn from letters written by the current Secretary of State for Education to Directors of Children's Services and to colleagues in the House of Lords on related subjects concerning developing policy and practice. I used content analysis of written data to enable me to draw conclusions from the context of leadership. Through this different lens I was able to extract the intricacies of policy development, the discourse which affected it and the emerging changes in direction. These emerging fluctuations in policy direction confirmed the context within which the leadership role needed to impact.

Similarly I utilised the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) to ask specific questions of policy development and spending regarding the implementation of the Academy Act (2010). The examination of the response to this request informed the analysis of the different tools utilised by national leaders which local leadership had to

respond to. It was also of interest in respect of levels of spend by national government on the implementation of new policy, especially as this denoted large levels of spend to interfere with local leadership roles, particularly that of local government.

### **3.8 Access**

In order to carry out the research, access needed to be gained from the local authority which was to be the focus of the case study. This was achieved through discussions at the corporate level involving the Strategic Director for Children's Services and the Chief Executive. This was formally requested in writing by the researcher to the Chief Executive and permission granted. Agreement was also made to prepare an executive summary of the findings for the Strategic Director who would share it with the Chief Executive, with a view to undertaking further discussions when the thesis was completed. The letter requesting access is contained within appendix four. Names and any reference to the place where the case study is undertaken have been redacted in order to keep this information confidential.

An interview schedule was diarised in order to undertake the interviews with key people within the organisation. A formal letter requesting an interview, together with a form for consent and background information on the research project was sent to each potential interviewee on the request of an interview with them. These are reproduced within appendix five. Again any sensitive information which would allow names and places to be divulged has been redacted for reasons of confidentiality.

### **3.9 Conducting the Interviews**

Each interview was scheduled for one hour duration and was recorded using a hand held Dictaphone with the agreement of the interviewee. After thanking each interviewee for sparing the time to take part I went through with them the documentation which had been previously sent to them and asked them to sign the consent forms. I summarised again the purpose of the research and described how these interviews would be used within the analysis. I was conscious that within this process I was interviewing elite subjects in that some of the interviewees were in powerful positions within the organisation and through their appointment to such positions were well versed in giving their opinions and thoughts. As such I

was aware that I needed to be confident in my own knowledge of the topic and the technical language used, as well as being familiar with the situation and biography of those being interviewed (Kvale, et al., 2009).

I was aware that I needed to act professionally and ethically throughout the research. In interviewing I had to be knowledgeable, structured, take the pace gently, sensitive in listening, open minded and attentive. I had to steer the interview with purpose, be critical in not taking things at face value, careful to remember what had been said and able to interpret by extending the meanings and clarifying statements made. This was how the 'interviewer craftsman' was described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) and I utilised these prompts for self-awareness and personal behaviour throughout the interview processes (Kvale, et al., 2009 p. 166).

At the end of each interview I allowed fifteen minutes for personal reflection and note taking on the process of the interview itself and also on the observations I had made regarding demeanour of the interviewee. It was from these reflections that I discounted one of the interviews and have not used it in my analysis. This was



because the interviewee, although very nervous, was also very keen to give me the answers they felt I wanted to know, and repeatedly checked throughout the discussion as to whether they were 'right' or not.

### **3.10 Transcribing the Interviews**

Each interview was audio recorded using a hand held Dictaphone which was tested to ensure that it was working at the beginning of each interview. This was directly transcribed verbatim into written format by one secretary whom I trusted with regard to confidentiality and suitably rewarded for the time that was spent on this task. The finished transcript was then e-mailed to me, and a hard copy given to me. I then listened to each tape recording checking the validity of the transcript. Each transcript was coded to ensure confidentiality of the interviewee. Questions and comments from the interviewer were recorded within the body of the transcript to ensure reliability for interpretation and comment later and to assist the contextualisation of the analysis.

### 3.11 Additional Data Collection

A request for information from the Department for Education was made using the Freedom of Information Act (FOI). The reply was delayed due to the diverse nature of the information requested, but was duly received. This information was used to ascertain the policy and processes of the Academisation of schools within local authorities, testing out some of the ethos behind the use of consultants in geographic areas who were seen as promoting the conversion to Academy status across a range of schools in any District. I have reproduced the questions asked as an FOI request in appendix six.

Alongside the above data collection I have also had access to various minutes and reports from relevant corporate meetings which focused on change due to the need to make savings against a reducing budget, meetings of officers which focus on the conversion of schools to Academy status, management meetings where discussions about inspections and change with regard to children's social care were undertaken, reports to various political committees within the local authority. I have not reproduced these here, but the analysis has informed the case study, enabling a 'rich picture' seen from many different aspects (Simons, 2009).

### 3.12 Analysing the Data

Developing the analytical framework for a case study – the object is just as important as developing the subject (Thomas, 2011). This section is about how I undertook the analysis of the data I had collected. The case study focuses on narrative collected either through hearing the descriptions of leadership theories adopted within the local authority alongside text narrative of minutes, reports, guidance and legislation. What I needed to achieve with the analysis was to identify the patterns and develop the connections in a manner which promoted my thinking and helped it to progress (Thomas, 2011).

For the initial analysis I have used the Constant Comparative Method (CCM) as described by Thomas (2011) in order to elicit the themes the case study generated. To do this I examined all of my data and made an electronic copy of all of the raw data achieved. I then marked this as 'RAW', giving me two copies: that of the raw data and those for working files. These were kept separate, with the raw data being saved onto a memory stick as well as my hard drive. I then renamed the second copy of my files to that of 'WORKING'. I then read through the interview

files again, making an initial map of them drawing out the main objects of each interview. These I translated into case study memos (Robson, 2002) in order to note these first themes or temporary constructs. I then re-read the interview transcripts to check the list of temporary constructs I had made. This enabled me to draw up a grid of the temporary constructs in order to page reference them and make any other extraneous notes against them, getting rid of any that appeared not to have been reinforced in the rest of the interviews through a different coloured highlight rather than deletion (Thomas, 2011). I returned to these later in the analysis to check if they proved a point by the omission, or highlighted areas of further investigation.

From this grid of comparison of all of the interviews I developed a 'second order construct' (Thomas, 2011) that appeared to reflect my data well and enabled me to summarise the emerging important themes. I then mapped these themes into a word cloud using 'tagcrowd.com' as a tool. To check the emerging themes I also developed word clouds of the actual interviews to see if I had missed any emergent themes, checking these against my grid for validity.

I then repeated the processes described above in order to draw out the emergent themes which defined the complexity of change from the rest of the documentary evidence such as minutes, reports, guidance and legislation.

### **3.13 Systems Thinking**

I then used systems thinking to model the themes using soft systems methodology (SSM) conceived by Checkland in 1981. This involved looking at the management of complex change as a problematical situation and then modelling them through designing a systems diagram between models and reality in order to develop understanding and improvement (Checkland and Poulter, 2006).

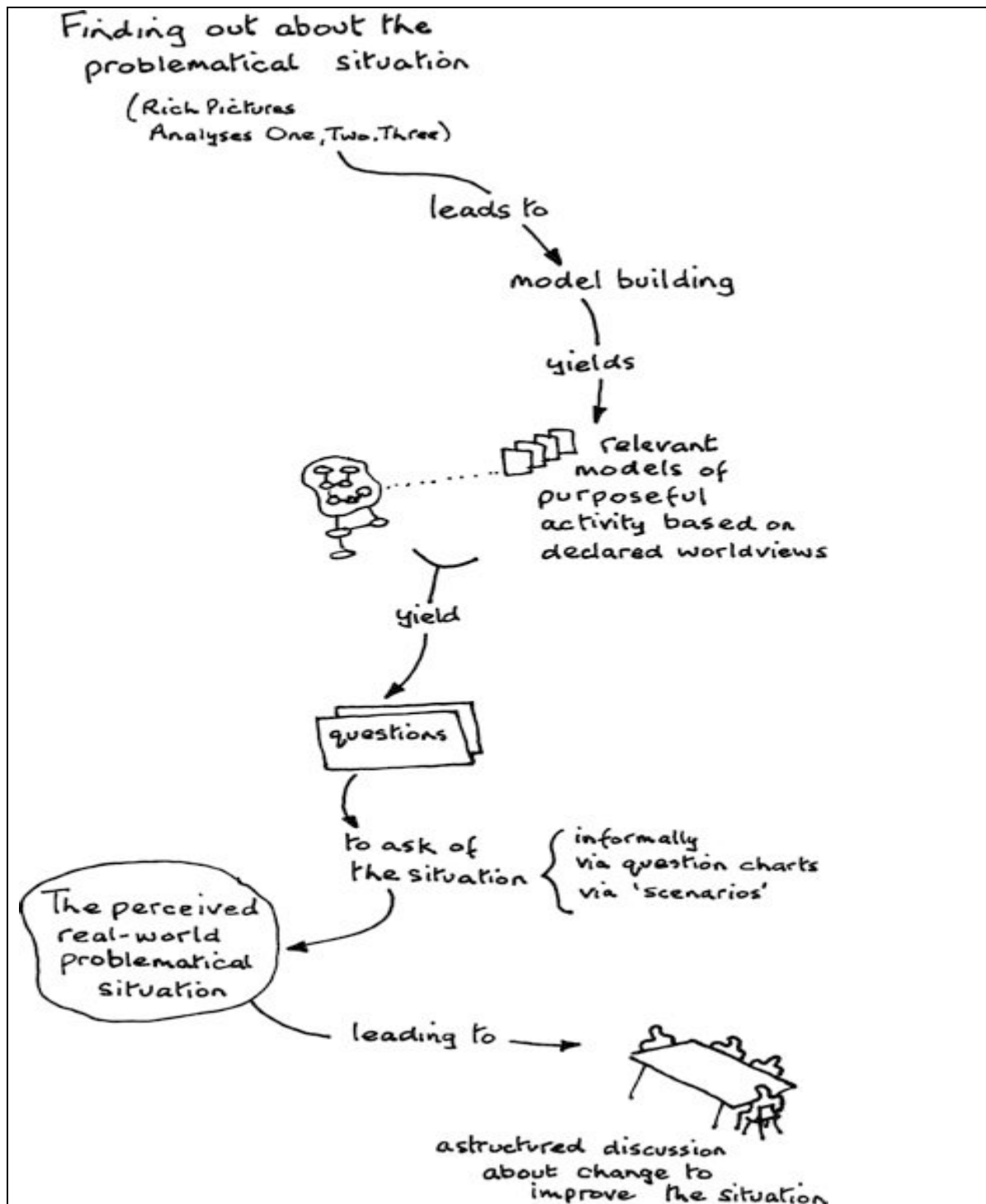
"SSM is an action-oriented process of inquiry into problematical situations in the everyday world; users learn their way from finding out about the situation to defining/taking action to improve it. The learning emerges via an organized process in which the real situation is explored, using as intellectual devices – which serve to provide structure to discussion – models of purposeful activity built to encapsulate pure, stated worldviews." (Checkland and Poulter, 2006 p.22).

This was undertaken to develop models of the leadership of complex change in a way that made sense of the worldviews of the leadership within the case study. This was achieved through developing rich pictures of the data, organising the problematic aspects of leading complex change. I then moved into systems thinking modelling which involved writing a root definition – describing the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of the system, which then enabled me to apply the analysis through the mnemonic of CATWOE. This is explained by Checkland as: C – Customers; A – Actors; T – Transformation process; W – Worldview; O – Owners; E – Environment (Checkland, et al., 2006). Checkland also suggests that the model is monitored by applying the concepts of efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness to it, this led me to defining these three areas prior to the modelling process being completed and are explained in the body of chapter four which deals with the analysis of the data obtained from the case study.

The diagram below (figure 3.1) shows the steps of the soft systems modelling as explained by Checkland and Poulter, (2006), although my analysis does not include a final structured discussion of how to improve the situation at this time. This is a step I may include in the process of presenting my findings to the leadership team within the case study and its inclusion will be dependent on whether the participants would want to take the research to support future improvement.

In conclusion then, I have used the Constant Comparative Method of Thomas (2011) followed by the Soft Systems Methodology of Checkland and Poulter (2006) as my toolkits for the analysis of the case study. This enabled me to develop a real-world model for leading complex change which I then used to compare with the learning identified within the literature review.

Figure 3.1: Reproduced from 'Learning for Action' (Checkland and Poulter, 2006, p.53)





### 3.14 Validity

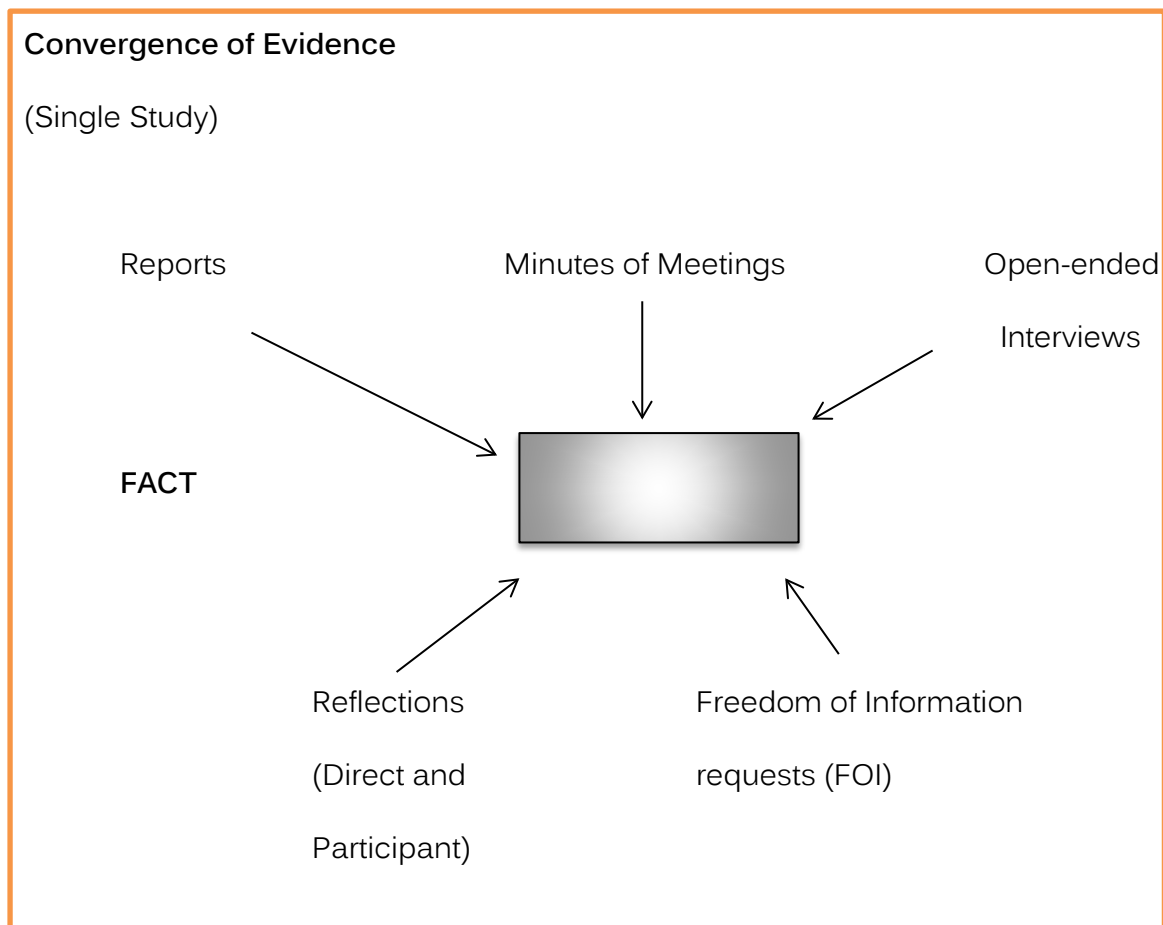
Great care has been taken to ensure the validity of the research, from the access and the construction of the interviews reflecting the ethical issues as they were engaged in and undertaken, with clarity given regarding how these were recorded and transcribed. Quotes used to enhance the 'story' from the analysis have been checked to make sure that they are in a correct written form, rather than direct speech transcribed so as not to be found as embarrassing by the interviewee when they read the research report, either through the use of oral language, which can be different to written language, but also to enable continued confidentiality as the report will contain examples from across one team of leaders within one geographical area, and linguistic styles may become recognisable to the reader (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

I have also attempted to ensure validity of the case study through triangulation of the data – looking at it from several different sources, methods and perspectives, in particular from the additional data gathered from minutes of meetings and reports, policy development at local and national levels and further discussions

within meetings to check out my thinking with those who have taken part in the interview processes. I have made a conscious effort to be reflexive throughout the analysis stage of the research, noting where I think an interpretation has a bias and where it is 'intelligence' which can further the analysis. The process of validation has been a dynamic one through gradually refining and corroborating evidence to make sure that it is 'true, credible and right' following suggestions about validity in case study research as explored by Simons (Simons, 2009 pp. 132-133).

I also made recourse to the three principles of data collection as espoused by Yin (2009). The first principle was that of multiple sources of evidence referred to above. The figure below describes these sources drawing on a diagrammatic explanation used by Yin:

Figure 3. 2: Convergence of Evidence (Yin, 2009 p. 117)



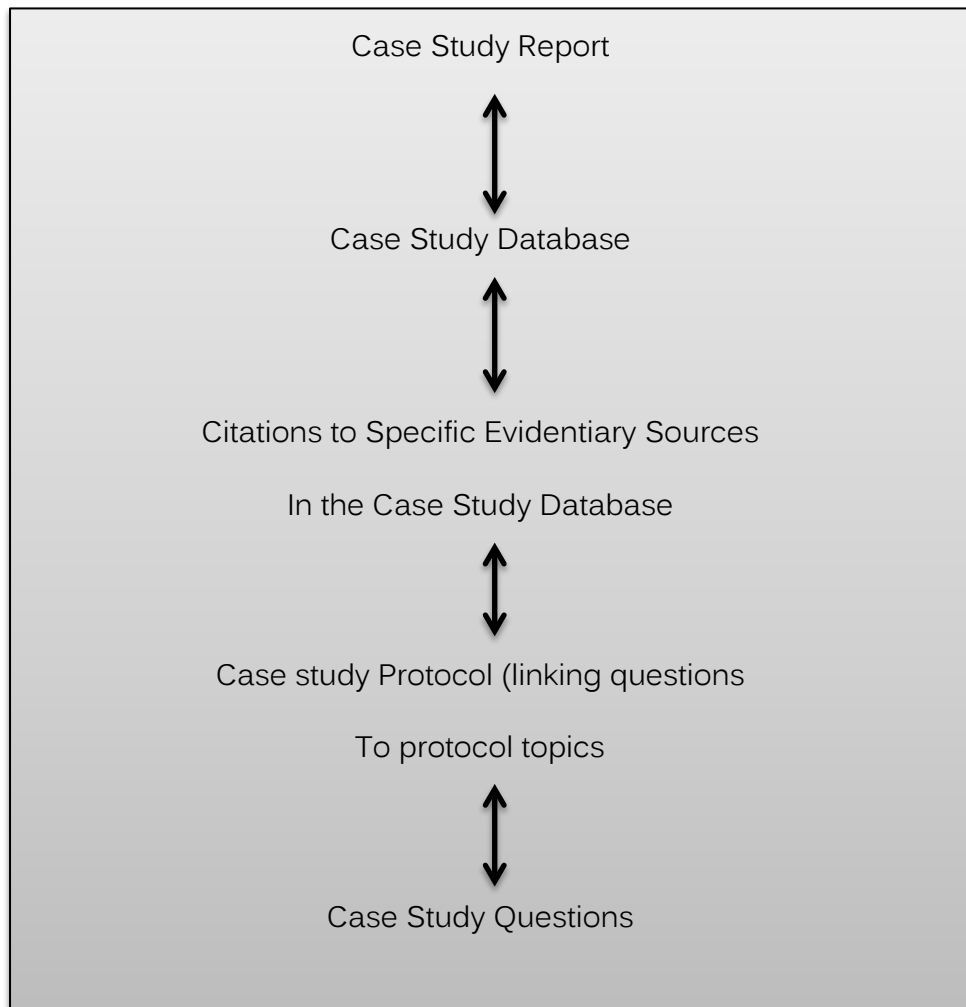
Using multiple sources of evidence in my case study has enabled me to investigate and address the broader range of historical and behavioural issues, with the most advantage to develop converging lines of inquiry. It has led me to present a case study which is, hopefully, more convincing and accurate, whilst avoiding the case study from becoming an 'interview study' reliant on verbal reports only that come

from open-ended interviews without the triangulation of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009 pp. 114-118).

Principle two for Yin (2009) is about creating a case study database ensuring the documentation and organisation of the data collected through the research. In this case the material has been stored in electronic format entailing case study notes, case study documents and case study narratives. Alongside this the analysis, through its various iterations, has also been stored electronically as part of the case study database. "The process (of creating a case study database) is actually an analytic one and is the start of the case study analysis" (Yin, 2009 p. 121).

The third principle cited by Yin (2009) is that of maintaining a chain of evidence, in order to increase the reliability of the information in the case study. This, states Yin, is based on the notion similar to that used in forensic investigations. It allows the external observer (the reader of the case study) to follow the development of the evidence from the initial research questions to the ultimate conclusions of the case study report. The figure below gives a diagrammatic view of developing the chain of evidence:

Figure 3.3: Maintaining a Chain of Evidence (Yin, 2009 p. 123)



### 3.15 A Rich Picture

One aspect of validation is seen as the 'generalisability' of the research project and in this respect the case study as a research design has proven problematic in this

domain. Indeed Thomas (2011) cited an example from a lecture given by Freud where he starts by saying " ... if I may be allowed to generalise – which is unavoidable in so condensed an account as this - .....". Thomas' response is unequivocally 'no', as he felt that inference could be taken together with interpretation in the context of personal knowledge. Freud's case study of an hysterical patient to which his lecture refers to can be given as a detailed and enlightening example of a well-researched case, but the use of a case study gives a highly analytical concept of one case in the context of the patient's history and as such is not generalisable (Thomas, 2011 p. 19).

Instead of generalisation of a case study as a method of confirming its validity as a piece of research, Thomas talks about 'abduction' as a means of making a judgement concerned with giving the best explanation for the facts being collected. He also points towards 'phronesis' as practical knowledge based on personal experience helping researchers to make sense of particular situations (Thomas, 2011).

At the early stages of my research design I recognised that within my ontology and epistemology I would be using abductive strategies to explain and explore the research in order to make sense of the leadership of change in complex situations.

What I have done is undertake a piece of research in the context of one organisation, drawing on the complexity of change across three distinct areas of change and how leadership of change not only copes with that change but attempts to rise above it for the benefit of children and young people – future building. I do not expect this research to change the world or to generalise across the theory of leadership. It does however give detailed insight into the leadership of change across a complex and shifting picture of national and local policy. It is this very insight which I conclude builds on the theory of leadership – the metanarrative of leadership, and that of leading change in a complex world.

However, what it does offer is looking at something, in this case leadership of change, in its completeness and from many angles, getting a rich picture and gaining analytical insights from it. For these reasons I have adopted the definition posed by Thomas (2011):

"Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems which are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame – an object – within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates" (Thomas, 2011 p. 23).

### 3.16 Ethics

My research has been based on the ethics research through British Educational Research Association. This study follows the five principles of: Harm; Autonomy; Privacy; Reciprocity and Equity as discussed below (Ethics and Educational Research, 2007).

1. **Harm:** the focus of this research is the leadership skills of Directors of Children's Services and their senior management teams, of which the researcher is one. It was important that the initial case study to test out and develop the theory of leadership in a challenging and changing arena was not associated with a particular local authority. That could bring harm on publication through drawing attention to perceived weaknesses or areas of development which may



be of interest to inspecting bodies such as Ofsted or government departments such as the Department for Education. The case study was developed after gaining support from the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive within the geographical area of focus.

Every effort was taken to remove any reference which could have alluded to the geographic location of the research. All data was coded after the individual interviews had been conducted and the gathering of minutes and reports was concluded. Care was taken to redact references to names, titles and location from the original transcript of interviews, minutes and reports used.

2. **Autonomy:** the process of developing a case study displayed respect for the people involved. Prospective participants made decisions for themselves about whether or not they participated. There was no deception around the research being undertaken, and all recordings were carefully coded to protect confidentiality before being included in any analysis. Where it was felt that the writing up of the analysis would identify some individuals to readers from within the case study area, these were not reproduced with the full narrative that they

used in order to preserve their autonomy of response and the confidentiality that this provided.

3. **Privacy:** Any report(s) or article(s) were anonymous with regards to the site of research undertaken. There remains no reference to individual names or titles, and all responses were treated with the strictest confidentiality.

4. **Reciprocity:** All participants were treated with the greatest personal respect.

No payments were given for participation, rewards were offered at the end stage, through a thank you note from the researcher. I did consider inviting all respondents out for a drink one evening, but as they were unaware of who I had interviewed, this would make it known to all and could compromise confidentiality. So chocolates were delivered to various team meetings as a way of saying thank you and celebrating the conclusion of the case study research at the same time. None of the teams therefore were identified as taking part *per se*, but all had supported me in my endeavours.

5. **Equity:** All participants were treated with equity, ensuring that none were unjustly favoured or discriminated against. Language used in report(s) or article(s) did not assume gender, ability/disability; sexuality; or faith.

I have also been mindful of the research ethics from the British Educational Research Association (2011) and ensured that I have adhered to these principles, particularly in respect of my professional conduct as a researcher (BERA, 2011). I used voluntary informed consent to engage with participants, who were advised of their ability to withdraw at any time during the research process. No subterfuge was used in gaining access to research subjects. Any incentives offered were commensurate with good sense and did not give any detriment to the health and well-being of participants. I have ensured the privacy and confidentiality of participants to this research, seeking to store information with respect to the Data Protection Act (1998) and have undertaken training on the application of information assurance and security. On the conclusion of my research copies of the thesis report was made available to all participants and I was open to discussion and explanation with them.

I have used methods within my research that are fit for purpose and ensured that participants are comfortable with these research instruments. I have conducted the research to the highest standards, undertaking skills development through the university and other training to support this. The research work has been approved by the university ethical committee.

### **3.17 Experience Memo**

I am aware that the research project developed and reported here has been defined from my own personal interests and that I have operated as a research practitioner throughout. This approach could also bring a bias to the research and in order to counter that I have examined the assumptions and values that I have brought to this research. This has been achieved through the development of an 'experience memo' which I have based on the 'researcher identity memo' (Joseph, 2009). I have undertaken this in order to explore and explain my goals and assumptions; as well as the advantages and disadvantages in relation to my experiences and how they have impacted on my research work. The full memo is contained within appendix three. It is written in the present tense and details my reflections at the time of writing.

# 4

## FINDINGS: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

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### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the analysis of the research data, drawn from interviews of local politicians and senior leaders within the case study area. The analysis also draws on data from minutes of meetings, reports to committees and corporate management meetings as well as notes of interactions at meetings in order to triangulate as far as possible in the analysis. Other documents which were included in the research data are reports from national organisations, letters from the Department for Education to the Lords on discussions of legislation being passed through Parliament, letters from the Department for Education to Directors of Children's Services as well as a Freedom of Information request to the Department for Education in respect of their implementation of the Academies Act (HM Government, 2010b).

Nineteen interviews were undertaken taking broadly one hour each. Each interview was recorded and transcribed with reflective notes written up immediately after the interview, recording the ambience of the interview. This included any other pertinent thoughts of the interviewer at the time (including personal reflections) in order to identify and record any particular anomalies in relation to the content of the interview.

One interview was completely discarded. This was due to a fault on the recording which made it impossible to transcribe, alongside this the observations written up at the end of the interview also raised concerns about the validity of the content, where the interviewee was very obviously trying to please the interviewer, was extremely nervous, disjointed, with a focus on tasks and delivery of services rather than the leadership elements that were sought. Despite repeated additional questioning and attempts to re-focus the interview on leadership, the interviewee was sweating and their body language was exhibiting additional nervousness through constant movement, e.g. constant jerking of right leg with intermittent breaks in this as they shifted in their chair (ON8). When the interviewer allowed the interviewee to talk about tasks and delivery they were more relaxed, but never

completely so. When it was discovered that the recording also had a fault on it, making it impossible to transcribe a decision was taken not to attempt to repeat the interview, but to discard it instead.

After transcription, the interviews were analysed to give temporary construct grids and alongside this a summary of the leadership aspects from each interview was drawn up as case study memos. The development of word clouds from the construct grids and the summaries of leadership aspects enabled the comparison of the constructs to highlight if there were areas of greater difference arising from the content of the various interviews. However, apart from a method of checking for any anomalies arising, the word clouds did not add to the overall analysis.

The temporary construct grids were brought together with the relevant sections marked against interview codes and page numbers to give the larger picture of leadership across the senior leadership as the focus of the case study. The opportunity was also taken at this time to add in any corroborating evidence either from other interviews or from the documents which were part of the data analysis. However, although a full analysis was undertaken and temporary construct grids

were made for each interview undertaken not all of these were transcribed fully into the document which brought the temporary constructs together.

This was because some interviews were used as corroborating evidence and I was concerned that their voices coming through within this domain could be attributable to individuals within the council by those who knew them well. This concern was greater where there was a challenge to or confirmation of data which was perceived as potentially negative. Therefore it felt more comfortable to me to ensure full confidentiality in this respect by referring to these corroborations in my own words, using as little interpretation as possible, but retaining a higher level of confidentiality as I believed possible in the circumstances. This concern was because I was fully aware that the resultant analysis would be shared with a minimum of the Chief Executive and the Director of Children's Services in the case study area, and indeed may be shared wider with the Senior Leadership Team.

Each temporary construct was treated as a singular construct theory, but relevant links were made to each other and care was taken to get 'under the skin' of the statements made, alongside any other pertinent evidence within the wider data.



This enabled a 'rich picture' to be drawn in relation to the leadership of change within the analysis.

From the overall analysis the chapter progresses to determine a model of leadership drawing on the common threads of leadership emerging from the research data. Following on from the emergent model further work is undertaken within chapter five where I develop the theory further, before final conclusions are drawn, using the methodology described by Thomas (2011) Checkland and Poulter (2006) and Yin (2009).

Before I entered into the development of the emergent leadership constructs I again revisited the context of my research. Some of the interviews and other data collected related to the context of change for this particular case study and I believe that re-visiting it at this stage of the research analysis puts the context at centre stage for the reader. The reader will find that the context is also represented strongly within respondents' discussions within the leadership constructs, which I felt added to the richness and depth of the case study overall.

## 4.2 The Context of the Case Study

Earlier on in the thesis I explained that this case study was looking at the leadership of change with three specific foci in relation to children's services. These were the economic downturn and the resultant savings that councils across the country are being forced to make; the national policy extended from the Labour Government in 2010 by the Coalition Government for the Academisation of Schools, alongside the introduction of Free Schools into the schools system; and the nationally driven change within the children's social care arena developed and introduced by the Coalition Government as a top down policy driver through the work of Munro (2010).

These are by no means the only change programmes being introduced through or impacting upon local authorities in England. However, I have chosen to focus on these areas specifically as different areas of change which have the biggest impact and although the reform of Welfare Benefits and the changes in Health equally impact on a local authority, these were still in development at the time the research was undertaken and were for this reason not included within the foci of change leadership. Indeed the three areas I have chosen as the context for change within local authorities were introduced early on in the life of the Coalition Government

with a plethora of policy changes, funding reviews and legislation. Furthermore on closer inspection there remains a great deal of tension within and between various policy positions taken by the Coalition Government, through its various departments.

A clear example of this is the statements made by the Secretary of State for Education in his inaugural letter to Directors of Children's Services seeking to strengthen the role of the local authority within the delivery of Education (D59). In this letter the Secretary of State also discusses his intention to bring legislation to develop Academy Schools as 'Independent' schools within the education system which actually constituted a large change for the way in which local authorities were expected to work with their schools. This legislative action has started a debate which continues at the time of writing around the need for a 'middle tier' for education (D60). Whilst the Government appears to be still trying to clarify the role of the local authority within the Academisation of Schools programme a speech given by the Chief Inspector of Ofsted in July 2013 (D61) made it very clear that Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) expected that local authorities would still intervene in all schools where they were failing or other concerns existed. This included

Academies and Free Schools, citing the Education and Inspection Act (HM Government, 2006) as the legislation still in place which gave a statutory duty for local authorities to ensure that schools were performing well, and where they were not to intervene and support them to do so.

One respondent talked about the lack of clarity regarding the overall direction of policy from national government and how this made it difficult to develop the longer term future for the local authority:

*"I think that trying to get your head around what's going on is the most difficult thing and trying to plan ahead at the moment is almost impossible because every couple of months somebody from the Department makes a new announcement and it's whether that's a wish list or whether that's actual policy nobody ever seems exactly very clear." (A1 p. 7).*

From information gained through the Freedom of Information request to the Department for Education it was ascertained that they employed over 600 people on the Academies and Free Schools programme during 2011-12, with a budget for self-employed professionals working with local authorities on persuading schools

to convert to Academies of £2.8 million for 2011-12. This did not include the costs of project officers who work with Academy sponsors on the conversions, the budget and/or spend for this was not disclosed (D62). These resources did not exist to the same extent under the previous government and evidenced the large policy shift through this additional investment.

By focusing their resources on the implementation of the change programme at the Department for Education in this way there was a clear and consistent approach evidenced through meetings held locally with the self-employed professionals and the local authority to agree target schools to prioritise the implementation of the Academy Act (HM Government, 2010b). Project officers were assigned to support each sponsor (D62) and additionally resources were allocated to the schools to cover such expenses as legal and personnel costs as well as the cost for changing signage at the schools and providing new uniforms (D63). However during 2012 the process began to change, with the Department for Education moving from selecting sponsors to asking the local authority to select and recommend sponsors and alongside this the actual processes for each conversion changed dependent on the circumstances of each school (D63). This introduced

variables within the process, which appeared at the time (and continues to be so at the time of writing) with what has become a disjointed response where the actions required to be undertaken by the local authority changed on a frequent basis.

Indeed it was referred to in one meeting as:

*“the Department for Education moving the goal posts depending on which side of the bed the civil servant got out of in the morning” (D63).*

This fluidity of policy shift has also been referred to within the literature review.

Similar policy shifts have happened in relation to aspects of policy regarding spending cuts passed down to local authorities. Cuts were introduced very quickly on the formation of the Coalition Government, with reductions mid financial year in what was then defined as the Area Based Grants (ABG) for Children's Services (D5). Area Based Grants were the funding streams for budgets to support the implementation of national policy and new legislation. Mid-year cuts are the most difficult to deal with due to budgets having been planned and allocated to resources such as staffing in order to achieve the activities required. To make savings in the middle of delivery causes problems as the removal of staffing resources can only be achieved through redundancies, the achievement of which

requires a period of consultation with trade unions and the individuals concerned.

This is not something which can be achieved overnight (D42).

This initial funding cut made in July 2010 was followed in the autumn of that same year by the Government speedily undertaking a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) a process where Ministers and senior civil servants review all of the Governments spending and re-prioritises it. This review led to further cuts passed down to all local authorities in England and resulted in the requirement to save £100 million over the following three years across the local authority which was the focus of my case study (D8). My research work and data collection took place during 2012 in the midst of these reductions being made.

One respondent was very specific about their concerns regarding the continued need to find savings

*"So I think that context is really important on the basis of how change then occurred, because the change is reactionary and has to be to a situation of reduced budget capability" (B4 p. 3).*

This was stated in the context of the discussions within the interview regarding the economic downturn and the requirement for a large amount of resources having to be removed from the local authority budgets. They went on to qualify these thoughts further by stating:

*"There was a change in political direction or a change in .... there wasn't a new manifesto for delivery or a new manifesto for life or a view of where it needs to go so all of those deeper issues are still very relevant within the country but have not necessarily been picked up by national change. National change has been about throwing, you know, a kitchen sink and everything you can at it, it's about making sure we don't sink into a depression."* (B4 p.3).

What was beginning to emerge here was a deep seated view that the way in which the Coalition Government has been dealing with the economic crisis was not an approach that this particular respondent agreed with and that is further confirmed later on in the analysis when I began to look at the overall leadership and particularly the leadership of change.



A further area of focus is that of the change in policy and direction for safeguarding children, where the process in place for assessment and child protection since the 1989 Children Act (HM Government, 1989) has been completely reviewed by Munro (HM Government, 2011). This has been a top down approach from the Coalition Government utilising a whole-systems approach where one of the biggest changes has resulted in the integration of different agencies into a 'front door' approach for initial assessment of needs for children and young people who are referred to children's social care as vulnerable or at risk of abuse whether physical, emotional or sexual, or indeed neglect. One respondent exploring the changes required within children's social care stated:

*"I was just seeing that kind of focus back to practice rather than process with Munro and thinking you know, the Labour government were really thinking we've ticked every box, filled in every form, had an integrated children's system, everything was done, that no child would die and everything would be hunky-dory and of course it's not." (C1 p.19).*

The leadership of change in this area is brought together within the overall analysis and explored further on in this chapter.

Furthermore the Government has been involved in other policy shifts involving the private sector which has given rise to policy tensions between the public sector, the private sector and the voluntary and community sector.

The private sector is often held up as the only way for all types of organisations to operate and this is often reiterated by national government whilst discussing the way in which local government should operate. Whilst not determined in any national manifestos within the Conservative Party an ethos and culture for mimicking the private sector within the public sector is evident from the various policies which have been determined and implemented over time. Examples of this are the privatisation of public sector utility companies and the introduction of such processes as Compulsory Competitive Tendering in the 1980s.

This culture moved publicly owned organisations into the private sector through the private ownership of the utility organisations, the breaking up of the national railway system as well as removing services which were delivered by local authorities, in this case the provision of catering and cleaning to local authority offices and

schools, including the school meals services. These were the ultimate actions of an ethos which depicted the private sector as the only method of delivering some aspects of public service and actions were taken to make that happen.

This ethos continues within the present Coalition Government with the introduction of the Localism Act (HM Government, 2012) where local authorities must have due regard to the setting up and support of locally run organisations to deliver public services. It introduces the Community Right to Challenge (CRC) where voluntary and community sector organisations can require the local authority to enter into negotiations with them with a view to these organisations taking over the delivery of that service locally.

However, a tension exists in this policy shift in that the final act of these negotiations is that of going to competitive tender, opening the process to the private sector to engage, with the potential of the private sector, including national and international organisations such as Capita and Serco, to enter the arena and take on the delivery of public sector services. This action of competitive tendering is an integral part of the financial regulations for all local authorities.

This policy is based on the belief that the private and voluntary sectors can deliver public services more efficiently than local authorities. However, where tendering and contracting arrangements are put into place, best practice dictates that these are for a minimum of three years, giving the potential of a one off saving on service delivery over the length of that contract. This reduces the flexibility of budget holders to make year-on-year savings and introduces the need to appoint contract managers to oversee and monitor the achievement of those contracts.

In order to speed up the process of 'localism' the Coalition Government is investing in and promoting the concept of 'mutualisation' of public services where staff members are able to form a co-operative or similar organisation and to continue to deliver services as an organisation independent of and under contract to the local authority. To this end £10 million has been invested in legal advice and project management available from national government to local authorities to introduce this way of working (D64). However, ultimately the final step remains as that of competitive tendering, just as it does for any 'community right to challenge' process from the voluntary and community sector.

All of this reduces the flexibility of use for the financial resources in a local authority.

The services which are most attractive to the private sector are those where trading already exists, such as the traded services with schools developed within education departments across the country arising from the introduction of Local Management of Schools (LMS) in the 1990's when those schools who had left 'local authority control' under the then Conservative Government's Grant Maintained movement were brought back into the family of local authority schools as Foundation Schools. This recognised the ambition of the headteachers of that time in not being directly managed by local authorities, with all of the perceived bureaucracy that entailed.

This independence was reinforced further by the 2006 Act (HM Government, 2006b) where local authorities were given the duty to develop a balanced mix of school structures which included Foundation Schools, Trust Schools and Academy Schools as well as Community Schools. This then became the new 'family of schools' with which the local authority worked, whilst reinforcing the role of intervention and support for its schools.

This new landscape of 'independence' led to the development and strengthening of traded services to schools, where professionals were bought by the schools from the local authority to support their development and improvement. This enabled those local authorities to enter into the market place for school improvement activities, competing directly with private sector organisations to gain the business of school support services. Legislation was introduced (HM Government, 2001) to ensure that local authorities in their remit of delivering traded services were not subsidising these services to the detriment of the private sector, but what it did enable was that if a surplus was made through this trading, that could be re-invested within public services.

The results of these developments over time have led to parts of the local authority acting as a private sector organisation. However, I believe that there remain some differences between how the public and the private sector operate in its ethos and approach to service delivery, having worked in both.

The majority of literature I reviewed for Chapter Two focused on leadership within the private sector and I had to search for those authors who focused on the public

sector. I felt it important to explore these differences early on in the analysis and indeed several respondents also referred to them as well.

### **4.3 On differences between the public and private sector**

The most obvious difference is that the private sector looks for profit to be made for its shareholders, whilst the public sector meets the needs of its community and citizens and is ultimately accountable to them through the democratic processes of local government. On initial consideration this does not appear to be too much of a difference. However I consider that there are at least four fundamental differences between the private and public sectors.

The first of these and perhaps the most obvious is the political nature of local government alongside the potential tensions between national governance and local governance in terms of national party politics and the differing ethos and principles of policy that this can engender. This is discussed by one respondent and reflected in the following statement:

*"... the sort of policies and a lot of the rhetoric that's coming out of central government, turn it into practical issues and depict it in a way that people can see it for what it actually is rather than what it aspires to be from policy makers centrally." (B1 p.9).*

This would not be relevant within a national or international company, where the regional or local subsidiaries would respond to the policies of the Headquarter position.

However, this direct governance arrangement is not in place in the public sector with national government reliant on legislation to ensure that local authorities, who are independent and directly elected bodies, to implement national policy. This led me to consider the second difference.

Local government is subject to a high level of regulation and inspection. For Children's Services the inspection is undertaken by Ofsted, led by Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate (HMI). This inspection regime grades various aspects of the services delivered by a local authority and failure to achieve in this arena can lead to direct intervention by national government and in particular by the Secretary of



State for Education. The actions taken with regard to this intervention range from inspections taking place more regularly or the setting up of an improvement board or to the ultimate sanction of removal of the service from the local authority, generally to be run by the private sector.

The third difference I want to highlight is the relationship between the employed staff and the elected members of the council. Within the democratic process it is the party with the majority of members elected to the council seats who form the administration for the local authority. It is this administration or ruling group which sets the policy and direction for service delivery. The elections for the council generally take place on an annual basis, some local authorities have a constitution which enables them to have an election for all seats every four years, some operate a two year election for half of the available seats and others have a three year election programme, which enables one year in four to be election free. In all local authorities each member will hold their seats for a four year period in total before facing a re-election bid.

All of the senior leaders and officers of a local authority are appointed to posts which are politically restricted in that the post-holders are not able to take part in any party politics at any level whilst employed by the council. This was summed up through the following discourse:

*"... there's a democratic process here, that elected members are elected to represent the constituents within the local authority area who use services, and their interests and their investment isn't necessarily, well it isn't in the profit angle and therefore financial gain, but there is a reputational issue like there is with good companies that they will have a stake in making sure that the Council conducts itself with probity and all these other things and has a good reputation, responds so they will step in, in a way if they think there's a risk to that or they think they have to represent their own constituents. I think that is very different." (B2 p.12).*

This means that politicians as elected members represent their constituents, whilst shareholders look after themselves and their own interests. Elected members have a view of their own and the council's reputation, particularly if they are from the leading group. Although there is a link to reputation for shareholders, in that a bad reputation for a company can impact negatively on profitability, for politicians

there is a different goal around representation within a multi-pluralistic society and their need to build on and retain this in order to gain re-election at the end of their four year tenure. So for me and the respondent above, it is the representational aspect of elected members in the public sector which sets them apart from shareholders in the private sector.

*"When I worked in the private sector I was never expected to brief and work with shareholders the way I feel we work and jointly lead through our communication and our reputational issues with the politicians in local authorities. You maybe see the Board of Directors in a company, now and again, not as regularly as you do elected members and you wouldn't, I mean shareholders you just wouldn't go into the detail that we normally do, and I think that's probably something to do with being elected."* (Summary by interviewer, B2 p.11 – 12).

The respondent continued with this debate around the differences between the public and private sector by recounting a conversation they had had with a senior leader who had just moved to work in the local authority from the private sector.

*"I was talking to somebody who's just joined us from the private sector.*

*They've been in the private sector all their life and just joined the authority*

*and I was asking them about the cultural shift and they said that they didn't*

*find the politics too fazing because they did as you've just said feel that there*

*was a strong analogy between non-executive directors, trustees on boards*

*with lay people with elected members and accountability issues and*

*governance issues being the same."* (B2 p.10).

This leads me to re-think previous analysis, however. There is a great deal of scrutiny concerning the operations of the public sector, formally through its various committees as checks and balances to decision making. In addition to this there is party political scrutiny to bring issues of political disagreement into the public domain. It is for this reason that the relationship, with communication and trust, is so different to that of board members or shareholders within the private sector. Elected members require briefing on a regular basis as well as being alerted to areas of potential difficulty where the reputation of the council is at risk.

The fourth area is that of relationships with staff and particularly of those with trade unions. That is not to say that the private sector does not deal with the unionisation

of their employees, however, the processes and policies for communication and consultation within the public sector is more burdensome in the public sector as compared to the private sector. As one respondent stated:

*"The thing they couldn't cope with was the trade union culture, a complete anathema and how that is one of the biggest contributors to the pace of change and not being able to move things on as fast as possible." (B2 p.10 – 11).*

Here it was felt that the structures of unionisation and the formal consultation with staff to introduce change become bureaucratic, slowing the pace of change.

They went onto acknowledge that:

*"I am sure that they do consult in the private sector but the culture is completely different and they will do it at the pace they feel the business need it to go at, won't they? Whereas we don't do it at the pace this business needs to go at. Now you could argue we have a lot of low paid staff and the need for a strong trade union movement is still there and we can't hand on heart say every manager in this organisation is a good manager because we know they're not." (B2 p. 11).*

This alludes to the belief that the pace of change is quicker in the private sector due to different levels of engagement with the unions and a stronger push to meet business needs. The respondent also speaks of lack of management skills within the public sector, as though this is not true of the private sector. I cannot take this comment at face value as in my career I have come across bad management in both the private and the public sector. Different research would need to be undertaken to ascertain this with any reliability.

However, the respondent does refer to the unionisation of the public sector as part of the bureaucracy. There are secure processes for formal consultation with staff with respect of any changes a local authority would wish to secure. Furthermore these are layered for consultation purposes, with Level 1 being the highest and are in relation to consultation by the Chief Executive Officer, with Level 2 relating to more detailed consultation with Strategic Directors. A further level, that of Level 3 engagement relates to Assistant Director's relationships and involves senior managers and further detail of what the change impact may be on staff and posts. This elongated consultation process does indeed extend the decision making process and adds bureaucracy to the change dynamic.

I believe that this bureaucracy is a result of the Callaghan term of office as prime minister and the 'winter of discontent' in 1978/79 (Wikipedia, (c) ) when the then Labour government tried to limit pay rises in the public sector to 5%. The resultant series of national strikes by the public sector saw the downfall of that government. Since that time great care has been taken within the public sector to avoid such a standoff, hence the introduction of greater and more structured consultation with unions in order to influence them and gain as much agreement as possible where change is being introduced.

In contrast, the emergent strikes within the coal industry were dealt with in an entirely different manner by Thatcher during the 80's (Wikipedia (a) ) which resulted in a breaking of the union hold on industry. Hence the private sector is more confident in its dealing with a unionised workforce and has limited the layers of consultation required.

The respondent then went on to look at the expectations of shareholders and viewed these as and relates to the fifth area that I consider:

*"... in very simple terms, shareholders just want a good return on their investment don't they? And, they're not going to interfere with the day-to-day stuff as long as the result is, and the balance sheet is, they're getting a good return, and they'll step in if they think the Managing Director or whoever isn't taking the organisation in the direction it needs to be going." (B2 p.12).*

This I think relates to the simplistic expectations of shareholders, whereas the politicians deal with a complexity of expectations from the plurality of society which has to be balanced carefully to achieve a majority agreement, which of course in the longer term supports their re-election.

Overall then, the largest difference between the public and the private sector is the political nature of the local authority, and it is this construct that I look at next.

#### **4.4 On political leadership**

A local authority is a political organisation and this comes through in the research data. Policy and direction is set by the leading political party of the day, with support and analysis from senior officers in that leadership role.



*"We have professional officers, and we've got Elected Members with particular interests and skills, and I would expect to be provided with some options by officers and a political steer by Portfolio Holders, and my job would be to see how that fits into the whole picture of what the Council is trying to do." (A1, p.6).*

This was reinforced by their following statement:

*"My job as leader of the political group in [REDACTED] is to make sure that people understand all the options – to make an informed decision, whether that's at Executive, [REDACTED] Group or at Council. And then it's up to the Portfolio Holder to make sure that the officers are delivering on that policy direction." (A1 p.8).*

This respondent felt that there was a constancy of leadership with one portfolio holder since 2010 and a senior leadership team which had been in post from 2007/8.

*"We have a constant leadership with one portfolio holder" (A1 p.1) and "... a stability in the senior management team of Children's Services." (A1 p.2).*

They went on to state later in the interview that:

*"We have oversight from the Portfolio Holder." (A1 p.8).*

This they felt gave a clear leadership role of the council and the district which enables portfolio holders to deliver against that overall direction, but not to micro manage the business of service delivery. The leadership of the portfolio holder is about retaining an overview of the world they are residing in, ensuring that senior managers reflect the policy direction whilst implementing required changes.

*"I see much of my role as welding together the different strands of leaderships to set the overall direction." (A2 p.14-15).*

Here the respondent was discussing what they viewed as their leadership which brings all of the different aspects of different leaders together for the increased performance of service delivery and improved outcomes for children, young people and families across the district. They go on to make reference to performance management and greater clarity of what is still needed to be achieved by various partners in that arena. This I feel is in relation to shared leadership, where the leadership across the Children's Trust shares the responsibility for performance and achieving good outcomes for children and young people. It is a shared leadership

because they hold each other to account for action or indeed inaction within these partnership arrangements.

The concept of shared leadership is continued with the following statement:

*"There has been a broad consensus across the whole of the council's political parties and leaders of various configurations to support what is needed to be done to create a stable, well led, well trained and reasonably resourced Children's Services within the overall priorities we've had," (A2 p. 4).*

For me this statement reinforces the shared leadership ethos. The administration cannot undertake distributed leadership. This would imply that there was one overall leader who distributed their leadership role across all political parties. In my analysis I liken this to 'sprinkling' leadership as you would confetti allowing other politicians to take part in the overall leadership role. Within a political organisation, such as a local authority, with clearly organised political opposition this would not be possible and the leading party would receive much ridicule within the public domain if they were to attempt to tell other parties how they should behave and what leadership role they should have.

However, the previous administration similarly had priorities for education and safeguarding. This re-enforces the goals and direction for children's services enabling a stability which goes beyond the stability of having a senior leadership in post over time.

What is emerging within this construct is that there is a tension between the national and the local agenda. This arises from differences at a political level, where the politicians locally are not only from a different political party to that of national. Local leading politicians also consider that there are on-going policy shifts and changes in direction from the national government which are not coherent and are difficult to interpret and make sense of overall. I referred to this earlier on in this chapter where I am setting the context of the case study.

## **4.5 On balancing Local and National Politics its Legislation and Policy**

One respondent clearly felt disempowered by central government, feeling that all of the power and control had been taken into the hands of the Secretary of State for

Education, resulting in the local authority role being more about influence and relationships with Ministers, than just working by rote to implement national policy.

*"He has (the Minister) created a situation now where the Secretary of State has almost taken all central powers, he's acting on his own volition in a way that I've never known any Secretary of State do." (A2 p.6).*

They go further:

*"They have (the Secretary of State for Education) unleashed an ideological experiment based on a model of so-called 'choice' that isn't really about choice because you can only have choice if you've got surplus capacity, but it's about breaking the power of the existing established order," (A2 p. 6).*

This is in relation to the perceived choice for parents when choosing and applying for a place in a school for their children. In practical terms parents can only express a preference for their desired school. There is no guarantee that a place will be available for them. This becomes even more problematic when there is a growing population and a reducing national budget of capital funds to physically expand schools. However the concept of choice is an old one introduced in the Thatcher years and never recanted by the following Labour government. To

enable 'choice' to be more meaningful a local authority would need to ensure that there are surplus places in schools, that is, places over and above the numbers on roll, up to their Published Admissions Number (PAN). This means providing enough funded school places across an area to provide flexibility in the system where it does not matter if some schools have more pupils and some have less. It is also of course dependent on the physical space within a school.

The over-riding feeling here is that of frustration that it is becoming more and more difficult to lead locally with such a plethora of national policy changes.

*"We're no longer even clear who schools are there for, now. In response to that I think there is the beginnings of quite a resurgence on the ground of people wanting to not be at the whims and mercies of people 120-whatever miles away, because some of the academy change models are taking more off a school than a local authority ever would and are treating the local school as a mere vassal. You know with some of the work we've got going on here ... I think in a sense a different model of leadership that's more collaborative, more co-operative that has a system leadership rather than a group of people saying: 'Here are your priorities, just you lot get on with it.' "*

(A2 p. 6).

Here the respondent is discussing their political view that academy chains are profit making organisations who are only worried about what they can bring in financially from their schools in order to support the central academy chain's infrastructure. This view has been espoused in other arenas in relation to the local authority, who would have previously taken money from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) across all schools in the area to support their own educational infrastructure. This political positioning has been reinforced by the respondent's previous experience of dealing with an outsourced education system which removed a large profit from the schools budgets.

They go on to state:

*"The best example of the sort of chaos theory comes from what happened with our FE funding." (A2 p.7).*

This comment relates to some of the immediate changes brought in by the Coalition Government when they came to power. It focuses on the direct changes in the commissioning model for post-16 funding, dismantling what had been put into place by the 2009 Act (HM Government, 2009) for the direct commissioning and contracting for post-16 learning. The Act remains in force with the duty on local

authorities to strategically commission learning which supports the economic growth of an area, but national government has moved the funding of this away from the local authority. This has resulted in the strategic commissioning role being developed and actioned through relationship building and influence of the independent Further Education sector.

This feeling of powerlessness was reiterated further:

*"What we've ended up with is local government has become the bit that does the bits that nobody else likes doing, so we've got strategic responsibility for making plans, for consulting, but ensuring that things happen but not got the tools to make them happen. But we're there to be blamed when they don't." (A2 p.7).*

Here the feelings of powerlessness and frustration are very clear. This respondent clearly feels that the local authority retains the statutory duties but without the funding to deliver. This is a common theme, politically speaking, where the local authority is of a different political administration to that of national government.



The policy shifts have caused a changed relationship with schools and other learning providers as the new educational system develops.

The local authority which is the case study for my research has taken a deliberate action to develop partnership working across all schools, learning institutions and other agencies and the respondent begins to allude to this as the interview progresses (D46).

*"Set against that you've got some of the things to do with localism and everything and the change requirements in cohesion and as a local authority who's serious about its leadership it can't just take the view, that's its schools have gone their own way, that's it." (A2 p.7).*

Here the respondent is referring to the Localism Act (HM Government, 2012) but also alluding to the schools already reflecting the ethos of that with local voluntary governing bodies that lead and manage the schools on behalf of their communities.

They went onto speak in depth about the need to develop integrated services, which is still heralded as the only way forward by the Coalition Government and is a theme central to the work of Munro (HM Government 2011).

*"The response to that was far better because of a growing collaboration and culture of co-operation between protective services with children's services, family support services, police, community relations, Prevent, whatever you call it so, you know ....." (A2 p.12).*

This I felt was an example to strengthen the view that integrated working is a better way of achieving good outcomes and that working in collaboration with other learning institutions and other agencies is better than the push to independence and separatism which the national government is promoting through the academy movement.

During the interview I really pressed this respondent to share his views on leadership and what they considered to be their leadership role. This resulted in the following two statements:

*"I am a strong supporter of the system leader, and political leadership is that we've got to be up to the mark" (A2 p. 13).*

Here they talk about leading the system from within and across the system as political leadership, however:

*"Overall I am a political and public leader and there is a strategic and operational split and you've got to try and stick to the cognisance governance and it's interesting how we do it, but at the end of the day Officers represent the delivery arm although they contribute to the thinking, strategy and information." (A2 p. 14)*

Here I think we get to the core of the matter, that whilst politically they feel that they have total responsibility for the leadership of children's services they acknowledge that the senior leadership of the local authority also plays a significant role in the leadership arena. Indeed previously when a child death has happened and it was felt that it could have been avoided, such as in the case of Baby P referred to earlier in this writing, it has been the senior leadership of the local authority which has held the ultimate responsibility and been dismissed, and not the political representatives of that council. At best this is a shared leadership role.

The difference within the local authority is, I think, there is a clear recognition that officers do not get involved in political leadership:

*"I am aware that you can't be political, following that as an opening statement."* (A1, p 3)

This gives a balancing role for senior leadership where national government sets policy and direction for the UK, which may not be convergent with local politics and direction where this is set by locally elected members from within the majority leading party. This gives rise to the need for leaders employed within the local authority to make sense of the national picture.

It is particularly so in respect of legislation and the need to interpret this to the local situation, working in a shared leadership role with local politicians to apply that legislation without undermining the local policy and direction as agreed and required by the controlling political group locally. Several respondents referred to this tension and the shared leadership role between officers and politicians, within their interviews:

*"...different change drivers and pressures .... " (B1, p 2)*

As well as

*"I think you've constantly got to be seeing things on the horizon, seeing those strategic opportunities whilst balancing out ..." (B2 p. 4)*

However, respondents were also clear that:

*"Not about just accepting government policy, it's about shaping the practical implementation in government policy in a way that works for us." (B1, p 7)*

And saw it very much as:

*"managing upwards with government and that means in local government terms rather than just seeing ourselves as an agency of central government, it's about us being a tier of government in our own right and being self-confident enough to challenge and to position ourselves to be able to do that." (B1, p. 7)*

This was also reinforced by those who had a sense of their role as dealing with the complex situations so that the public didn't have to. They were clear that part of their role was to translate these complexities into what should happen in order to deliver coherent services for the benefit of the communities they serve. They felt that this gave stability for the locality against a changing tide from government which has no clear understanding of the outcomes and impact locally of national programmes.

*"I don't think anybody has really got a handle on what is happening nationally and how, particularly, the education services [are] fragmenting with academies, free schools, LEA schools and the whole raft of stuff that the Secretary of State is talking about - the return of 'O' levels, the 'threat' of non-qualified teachers being allowed into the classroom in free schools and in academies - and there is a real state of flux and I think there is a lot of confusion out there about what that means, and so it is important that there is that stability in the centre at the Council so that there is a sense of leadership out there. So I think that's one of the key things we have managed to keep for the last two and a half years." (A1, p.3).*

However, there is a clarity of leadership roles emerging here and the relationships between political leadership and that of senior officer leadership within a local authority. This is built on role expectation and relationships between the two groups of leadership.

*"I would expect a clear exposition of the challenge and a clear set of options about how you can address it." (A1 p.6).*

This to me means that there is an expectation and a requirement for senior leaders to support the local political administration and work together to resolve issues through advice on options or choices which are clearly explained in order to develop a way forward.

However, there is a recognition from across the broader leadership that the focus is always on delivering services to meet the local needs of citizens, in this case for children, young people and their families. This position is irrespective of the political persuasion of the controlling group within a local authority and starts to reflect the moral purpose that senior leaders develop and adhere to within public leadership.

*"... it's not about just accepting government policy it's about shaping the practical implementation of government policy in a way that works for us ...."*

(B1 p 7).

This acknowledges that senior leaders need to interpret and make sense of national policy in a way that enables local needs to be met and at the same time meet the requirements of legislation. This is confirmed through the following statement:

*"managing upwards with government - and that means in local government terms rather than just seeing ourselves as an agency of central government, it's about us being a tier of government in our own right and being self-confident enough to challenge and to position ourselves to be able to do that."* (B1, p.7).

Here the respondent is beginning to explore the need to have an active and agile leadership which can support the development of a nimble and flexible organisation in its own right in order to meet local needs: a clear role for what is now being discussed as the 'middle tier'. It also led to the need to look at the personal leadership skills required to do this:



*"... personal credibility and all of those skills but it's a hugely important part of leadership." (B1 p 7)*

It involves looking at how they are viewed in their leadership role and ultimately their place in the world. It gives a clear role for the locality, and is about positioning themselves as well as positioning the organisation that they work within.

They go on to say:

*"... put that in the context of what we're trying to achieve in terms of the systemic change we're leading in this place." (B1 p. 9).*

This is again a reference to what is emerging as moral purpose in public organisations to lead change for the ultimate benefit of local citizens. It touches on systems thinking and systems leadership but invokes the need for a collective and total change to the current systems which are not improving services and outcomes quick enough. This is explored further within the construct theory on systems thinking later on in this chapter.

There is further acknowledgement that politics work at different levels within the system, nationally and locally, in that funding cuts are made nationally and passed

through to the local authority. However, decisions are needed locally to determine how those savings will be made and which services will be affected to what degree.

*"... the politics needs to work at a different level in terms of prioritisation, in terms of deciding what we absolutely are going to do and going to do well and we might need to invest more resources: those things we're going to stop doing altogether, those things that we're going to be prepared to change the threshold for service delivery particularly around social care and things like that and those things that we're prepared to consider changing the frequency of. " (B1 p. 16).*

Here the respondent is clear that local political decisions need to be made as a result of national policy with the need to balance out the national policy with the local policy direction. Ultimately these are political decisions which are advised and informed through the officer leadership role:

*"A process that's led by local politicians and by the community themselves and (our role is to) give the community the information." (B1 p. 17).*

Here the respondent is alluding to the complexity of balancing local politics with national politics and policy directions and the subtle differences between the

political leadership and the officer leadership role within a local authority. The politicians are responsible for the political decision-making, ultimately in setting a budget for the financial year, through working together to explore options and make sense of, in a way, how national policy can be delivered. The officer leadership then leads on community consultations, informing the community of the proposals. Local politicians also receive representation as politicians from groups and individuals. All of this information then informs the ultimate decisions of the leading political group which are then taken to a full council meeting where the budget is set for the coming year.

Other respondents give different examples of the balancing required between national policy and direction with local needs:

*"What isn't there is the requirement to produce a plan and there is still a duty to cooperate and for partners to work together as set out in 2004 Act but because of the change that lifting the requirements of a plan and the 'Every Child Matters' going out the window, as it were, for some people but not for us, for Ofsted maybe, well up until May, it is now, it's dead in the water with Ofsted now but it isn't for practitioners and it isn't for people who are passionate about children and young people." (B2 p. 9).*

This refers to the Children and Young People's Plan which became a statutory duty of the local authority in 2010 (HM Government, 2009). Within the 2004 Act (HM Government, 2004) it was considered as guidance for good practice to develop a Children and Young People's Plan through the Children's Trust Board. However, even though the statutory duty for a plan of this nature was removed by the Coalition Government alongside the requirement to implement the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, a clear decision was taken to ignore this and continue to develop and work to this type of plan in the interest of the local needs of children, young people and their families.

However, the change in national policy and statutory requirements did lead to further considerations on how best to deliver a planned way forward to improve outcomes overall:

*"The Children's Trust Board has sort of said: 'Right well, ok - we'll move away from having all these groups around the five outcomes and this massive complicated structure and let's just think about what are the core priorities based on the needs of this district.' And we know what all the needs are and so we have three very clear priorities around education, vulnerable*

*children and child protection and a massive inequality, with child poverty kind of being the umbrella of all of those equalities and what wellbeing is for. And then put together things that will help deliver improved outcomes and you know that is a very worthy model actually.” (B2 p. 9).*

Leading the debate across the shared leadership arrangement of the Children's Trust Board took the balancing between national policy and local policy to a wider arena, beyond local politicians and into the delivery arena for services which enabled a re-focusing on outcomes and a simplification of what was becoming a rather complex arrangement to evidence the achievement of the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. It did not ignore or remove them but did enable them to be re-framed in slightly different language which gave the impression of compliance but was not necessarily so.

They go on to say:

*“I do think the politics has an added complexity to it that we have to manage and help members understand, but you know, they set the policy and we implement it so we just have to try and shape that policy.” (B2 p. 11).*

The above is a clear example of how this has been achieved where influencing skills and the positive leadership of change have been utilised to shape policy

whilst balancing national expectations through policy change with the local political dimension.

Whilst discussing the national direction of reduced resources for local authorities a further example was given:

*".... back towards the locality and the operational structure of the organisation and say right we've got the management team, the leadership team, we're now faced with these reductions, because we know we're doing it, but then how are you then going to do it is another big issue and why are we then doing it even is another big issue." (B4 p. 3).*

Bringing that national scene from the economic crisis and fiscal change to the local area requires not just the 'how' of the requirement to balance the national with the local it also requires doing this in a coherent manner. Not only do leaders have to make sense of the national policy direction they have to look at ways of implementing that locally, even when there are difficult decisions to make. This is alongside the potential position of total disagreement with the reasoning for the national policy direction. This coherence-making as a role for leading change is the next construct theory that I explore.

## 4.6 On Coherence Making

Coherence-making as a construct theory here refers to the need to make sense of the drivers for change, to put together a clear rationale and logic to the changes required to be undertaken and relates to all of the foci within this research project. Here I argue that without this 'sense-making' the complexity of change within the case study could become inconsistent in its application and introduces a very real risk of failure overall.

I begin with one respondent who is clear that there are challenges with the pace of change in national policies and what this means for the local authority. It includes concerns about the need to portray a stability of local policy and direction to reduce what is perceived as an adverse impact on the local area.

*"The challenges that have been faced since the General Election 2010 make that particularly important, in that when schools or parents or governors are talking to the Local Authority they have at least had a constant message and I think that gives them some comfort in, whether they agree with the*

*direction of travel or not, at least it is a direction of travel without any handbrake turns."* (A1 p. 2).

Although the statement focuses on schools and education, as a priority for the council (D 24), it does give clear thinking to the need to make sense of complex change in a way that citizens and others can understand. It also alludes to the need to make sure that when developing coherence this applies to the total direction of travel within all of the change processes in a way that makes sense and also offers consistency to those policies.

It does include the need to balance national policy and legislation with that of local needs and again links to the two construct theories. A clear priority for the council is that of education, particularly around raising achievement. A national policy and legislation around an Academisation programme for all schools could in fact detract from this priority as it requires Headteachers and Governors to change their focus onto structural changes for the school and away from such areas as improving teaching and learning to increase achievement for their pupils. The reference to 'handbrake turns' I believe reinforces the need for stability within an



arena of complex change which allows the local authority to steer a steady ship through these potentially turbulent waters.

Furthermore the respondent also recognises that the idea of Academies as a structural change for schools was introduced by the previous government and as such is not a completely new policy. However, the legislation and expansion of this original policy from what was a programme of change targeted to that of perceived 'failing' secondary schools to encompass all schools under the Academies Act ( HM Government, 2010b) is viewed as bringing more complexity to a change programme.

*"The schools' agenda you could argue in one percent that there is a continuity from what the last government did in terms of Academies but I would say that this lot have changed things dramatically..... but we were able to deliver those tailor made to our local circumstances." (A2 p. 5).*

It also reflects on the deliberate policy adopted locally which has focused on the development of positive partnership working across all schools, irrespective of their structures, be they Academies, community schools, trust schools or faith schools.

They return to this theme later on in the interview:

*"One of the other things that we have to spend a lot of time doing is weaving the different initiatives together into something that makes sense." (A2 p. 17).*

This statement is made in the context of rapid complex change where all areas of children's services have been, and still are, subject to change with what the respondent views as no national coherence in policy on how all of that change works together, so a further leadership role for them is to make sense of it all.

Furthermore they view this as a clear leadership role to undertake this coherence-making and having drawn conclusions from it enter into the leadership role of setting direction, sharing ambition for positive change which does not necessarily reflect the national direction but makes it all work for the local area. They talk about bringing people on board through sharing that vision, utilising relationship building to develop an influencing model of leadership to achieve shared goals.

*"Pulling together the different initiatives, making sense of it. That means we're constantly having to use our leadership role rather than the administrative threat and power of the leading political group and in many*

*ways it's created a situation where the lead member role has become perhaps more significant because you can't achieve it in that manner. You get the impression that, it feels to me that, it really matters that you go out and argue a case and you put something passionately and strongly and you need to convince people to come on board because you can't tell them to come on board. You actually need to win the argument, win the case and get them alongside operating a more collaborative model, where co-operative principles increasingly apply. That it is your role of making the case, this is my community, this is what we expect for it, we have to have the end vision, and raise questions ('Why aren't you doing this, why isn't that happening?') and to be the critical friend of the system." (A2 p. 17-18).*

I found it interesting that the concept of 'critical friend' was introduced at this point in the discussion and believe that this reflects on how challenging the respondent finds this aspect of leadership.

The aspect of challenging leadership is picked up by another respondent which further supports the construct theory of coherence making.

*"It is challenging and you have to, particularly on the free school agenda, not be fazed by perhaps some of the players or what free schools potentially could bring in terms of de-stabilising strategic planning (certainly for school places) but you really have to go that extra mile of embracing those people and taking them with you so it doesn't de-stabilise that kind of coherence in creating more school places." (B2 p 5 – 6).*

What also comes through from this respondent is that there is more confidence about their ability to deal with and meet this challenge. It is a quiet confidence around their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships as well as their confidence in achieving the wider vision, being able to deal with coherence-making within that. To me it demonstrates their overall commitment, determination and passion for the vision for education and children's services across the district. They evidence this further with a clear example of how they share that coherence-making with others.

*".... presentation at the road-show that I did last year and this year and what I've said to the staff at the road-shows. I share all the different things that*

*are happening on a great big slide and then I try and make sense of it all and the feedback I get is very positive. That seems to work for them.” (B2 p 7).*

This not only gives a practical example of coherence-making, it alludes to the necessity to share that and engage with staff so that they can more fully understand how all of the changes that are happening fit together and supports the achievement of the overall vision and priorities for the council and children's services in particular. It gives them the purpose of change and removes some of the fear of change. Making sense of it all and putting what is viewed as complex change within the parameters of 'this is how it will help us achieve what we want to do anyway' removes change from the personal impact to the improvement of service delivery. This is an aim that all share and takes them along on that change journey. It also reflects on the construct theory of good communication and the positive engagement of staff within the leadership of change.

Coherence-making is also referred to within discussions about the 'Changing Our Council' programme of change, which was a process of change adopted corporately across the organisation. This involved a centralisation of some functions which shared a common purpose across the Council and brought

together various roles for performance management, consultation and policy development. It enabled a range of posts to be moved from within Departments to a centralised resource as well as rationalising the number of staff undertaking this role, in particular those at a management level. This was referred to as a new operating model for the Council and it had to be developed and communicated in a way which made sense to elected members, unions and staff in order to achieve a structural and cultural change for the organisation (D51).

*"A leadership role I guess is also to make sure we are doing our job within the parameters of the new operating model and those principles which have to be re-enforced, obviously, for elected members, and make sure that they're comfortable with those and then it's for us to deliver against them."*

(B3 p 29).

What this statement leads me to is that coherence-making is very important when leaders are responding to complex change. Making sense of the changes that are being required is important to the leadership of change so that elected members, partners, unions and staff can understand how it all fits together within the overall vision. The process of coherence-making also enables the vision to be reaffirmed and through the communication of this, strengthens the reasons for

actually undertaking the change required. It also helps to balance the local needs with changing national policy and legislation and by doing so removes some of the barriers to change that can arise from within and outside the organisation. This removal of some of the barriers reduces the risk of failure for the change programmes as a whole.

Furthermore I do believe that coherence-making is central to dealing with the complex change which the case study area is dealing with. I have therefore developed a separate construct theory on the complexity of the change being studied.

#### **4.7 On the Complex (and making it simple)**

Whilst some respondents referred to the leadership of change as *"not rocket science"* (B1 p. 3) others referred to it as *"quite a culture shock"* (B2 p. 2). Within this context some respondents referred to the fact that prior to 2010 when the first cuts were passed down to local authorities, staff had only experienced areas of growth, with a range of grants being passed down to them from central government. Admittedly these grants were targeted to specific national priorities,

but it still led to a feeling of growth overall and certainly had the impact of investment in services.

One respondent articulated this well:

*"... in the course of the last 15 years, certainly 10 years prior to this government coming in, the growth in Children's Services expenditure has been huge and it's certainly having to completely change its way of dealing with that now, so I think for managers and leaders in Children's Services who've only experienced the last 15 years it's quite a culture shock and we have to take that into account." (B1 p. 2)*

A further respondent referred to the complexity of the organisation alongside the complexity of change happening on different fronts. They also referred to the need for different leadership skills being required within this environment in comparison to those required and utilised in a steady state of funding with step changes to achieve improving outcomes.

*"The leadership skills that we need in a fast moving, complex environment where there's a lot of change happening on lots of different fronts at the same time, are very different to the leadership styles that are most effective*



*in a steady state where funding, and where all the variables, are pretty constant or predictable.” (B1 p. 2).*

This statement I feel also recognises that leadership role requirements change over time and within different contexts. Leading change then, requires a leader who has an agility and acuity to give the flexibility needed particularly within the arena of complex change explored within this case study.

This respondent goes onto discuss how they feel the complexity of change within this context should be addressed.

*“So first of all the question is, for me, does the organisation have not just a clear focus on the next bit of change, but does it have a clear vision for where it wants to be? Has it done the environmental analysis, has it done the horizon scan, is it aware, is it strategically aware, of all the threats and opportunities that are facing it over the coming years. And within that context can you place all the different change drivers and pressures that are coming your way?” (B1 p. 2).*

To me this is looking beyond the coherence-making of the previous construct theory and discusses that even though there is a complexity to the change programme, a leader needs to lift themselves above this in a way to keep focused on the bigger picture of what they are trying to achieve. It is about really knowing the environment you are working in to even hope to deal with these complex changes.

Other respondents however felt that:

*"..... [within the complex arena of change] the classic leadership skills in some ways don't change." (B2 p 2)*

Here they were referring to such areas as visioning, goals, prioritisation and culture.

Reading the two statements above together could lead one to conclude that these leaders of change are adopting two opposite positions. However, the first statement does refer to visioning and keeping sight of where you are trying to get to, knowing your environment and prioritising change. Furthermore reading all of the interviews in totality, I believe that the 'classical' leadership roles for visioning, goals, prioritisation and culture come through very strongly as a platform for the

leadership of change. I treat these skills then as their own individual construct theories to support my overall analysis of the research data.

The same respondent who referred to those classic leadership skills above also went on to discuss the complexity of change as well as referring to the need to make sense of those complexities.

*"... [the change required] is incredibly complex and part of the role that we have is to interpret and explain that complexity to key stakeholders, whether that's elected members or frontline staff and for us to make sense of it all and shape it." (B2 p 6 – 7).*

The statement above is clear that the change being dealt with is complex but goes on to explain that a leader has to make sense of this complexity, coherence-making, for others to understand the change and for the leader to be able to shape that change. To me, that involves making the complex simple. It incorporates being able to explain it in the context of change and being able to share that interpretation clearly with others.

The following takes the construct theory analysis further through its explanation and detail. The deconstruction of the complex takes the view that not only does the

leadership of change involve dealing with complex change it also involves simplifying this in a manner that makes links to the visioning for the council. This in turn enables a leader to make use of opportunities that this may bring, to maximise the change in support of achieving that vision.

*"Because you can say, this is coming in there and this is coming in there, but actually there are threads through this – so you'd look at the whole drive towards, for example, the Primary Care Trust and commissioning – how we'll do things and the response of the direction of travel for Local Authorities – and getting that out to schools is all part of the same policy drive around community based decision making. And suddenly it all fits together, you can actually see the framework in which you're operating and then you say, 'Right what's our role in all of that?' and our role is to provide that shaping and commissioning and enabling and leading and seeing that overarching picture, to make sure it does all fit together so that it kind of wraps itself round the needs of vulnerable children and families and that's being delivered." (B2 p 7).*

Because the respondent is clear that they are breaking down the complexity of these changes and making sense of them within the wider vision they are able as a

leader to retain the focus on positive outcomes for children, young people and families.

The respondent goes on to confirm this as a leadership skill which benefits not only the outcomes referred to above, but also supports the understanding of complex change for partners, staff and the community.

*"A prime role is for us to understand the complexities and interpret and explain it to those that it's just so overwhelming to ..." (B2 p 7).*

This I believe is further evidence of the recognition of the complexity of the change programme being undertaken and the importance of coherence-making in order to reduce the complex nature of the change. It also enables a leader of change to explain that complexity clearly and show staff and others how it all fits together so that the overall vision and goals can still be achieved within that complex and changing world.

They conclude their discussion on the complex nature of change with the following view.

*"We're in a good place to do that because we do have the overview, we do see all the different aspects and it does sometimes feel like you're spinning*

*plates or juggling balls or doing all of that kind of stuff, but I think that's what we're good at actually."* (B2 p. 7).

## **4.8 On Communication**

Communication was discussed by all respondents as a very important aspect of leadership. This became even more crucial within the programme of change. The following highlights some of the general areas of communication from respondents. However, due to the importance of the leadership role here I have broken this construct down further to reflect the various aspects of communication referred to.

*"It becomes critical, in that because if you're going to convince your stakeholders, your partners, your staff, schools, outside agencies, voluntary sector, the community, politicians etc. that you have the right strategy, you have to be able to sell it to them, you have to have clarity of vision so that people can buy into it and you need to engage and communicate that very importantly."* (B1 p.3).

This respondent is well versed in the need to communicate well with a range of stakeholders. They present a charismatic personality speaking with passion and determination to get their point across early on in the interview. They meet frequently with staff groups through road-shows across the district, alongside other senior leaders. Reflective evaluation took place in the Corporate Management Meetings (D7, D19, and D31) and their impact was measured and assessed.

These were well received by the staff in attendance and positive comments on this method of communication have been shared with the interviewer by other respondents and through personal observation by the researcher (ON22, C3, C4, C7, C8, and C9). This was not the only means of communication, but it was an effective method.

What it does speak to is the need to develop a clear strategy and vision for the overall direction of the local authority, but in this case to communicate it in a way which supports people to understand the priorities of the council and to buy into that. It speaks to influencing skills and engaging with others at the right level. Furthermore, it is important to the leadership of change and succeeding with that change.

*"... communicate it credibly so people believe in you as the leader, so they have confidence in you to lead the change process and get the organisation and the system to where it needs to be to succeed in the future is really, really important." (B1 p.3).*

Here the respondent talks about the 'how' of communication skills. Other respondents discuss the issue of confidence in the context of the leadership of change so I have developed this as a separate construct theory later on in this chapter. What comes through strongly for me in this statement is that of communicating well enables a leader to succeed with the change process. It gives credibility to the leader as well as the change process. This was spoken from the heart and the respondent came across as very passionate for this concept (ON3).

*"... your ability to listen, to engage, to receive feedback, ...." (B1 p.5).*

In discussing the active listening required by leaders, the respondent goes on to state



*"..... to accept challenge, to then take account of all of those things and without losing the overall focus, demonstrate that people are able to shape the agenda and influence you where it's appropriate." (B1 p.5).*

This fleshes out the process of communication and underlines that the skill of active listening and engaging with others in a way which involves them in shaping the future is important. It recognises that a leader of change needs to be seen to be influenced themselves, with communication which is more than one way. It is a discussion between the respective parties.

This is a high level skill to maintain. Furthermore other data does raise contradictions to this in terms of this respondent's actual use of this skill area (ON23, C5, C7, and C3). Here observation and other respondents give evidence of this respondent not accepting challenge alongside them giving acerbic responses targeted directly at individuals. However, these are made within what I would assume to be the safe environment of the senior leadership team. One respondent felt that they had been on the receiving end of these negative challenges, but this was within an area of change that they were frank about not

agreeing with, to the extent of arrogance for their own view being the only one possible.

I feel overall that this is about the respondent being human and suffering from frustration which is hard to deal with and has presented itself as anger. A concern that remains is that of the personable moving to the personal and there is other evidence presented of this in other interviews (C5 and C9). Here one of the respondents felt that that this personalisation led to favouritism which they viewed as equally negative for the senior leadership team.

The same respondent goes on to talk about that very thing, the concept of being human and acknowledging that as such mistakes can happen and a leader cannot get everything right all of the time. This is very self-reflective and was observed as such within the interview (ON3).

*"You never get everything right so acknowledging that and showing how you're learning will cement that relationship, that respect, but also build motivation amongst the people that you're seeking to influence." (B1 p.9).*

In this statement the respondent is thinking about how that works, feeling that they are only human, and as such can get things wrong. The discourse reflects a learning human being, asking others to work with them on that. It appears to be used as a motivational method to support them in this endeavour that enables them to influence others.

However, again feedback from others is that this is not viewed at the same level of truth that the respondent is intending here (C2, C5 and C7). Here it is probably worth mentioning that some of these respondents have now left the organisation and their comments and views could be linked to the process of disengagement. After all it is easier to leave something behind if you disagree with it or find it difficult to deal with, than it is if you are still passionate about it.

*"Where they haven't changed what you're doing that you can actually reflect back to people that you've thought about what they've said and that you've taken account of it because it's part of building ownership." (B1 p.5).*

This I feel is a telling comment of about when they haven't changed what they are doing. Some respondents feel that this is the norm in terms of not changing what they are doing or thinking. Furthermore they feel that they have been asked outright 'do you agree with this' as a method of gaining ownership, which has not necessarily worked with those involved not then going away to implement the change in question (B3 and C7). However, the respondent themselves do feel it important to be reflective and to share with others the reasons why they have not taken account of what others have said.

They also feel that it is important:

*".... not about being top down and dictating, it's showing clear leadership and vision but it's about influencing people because we want people to come along on this journey willingly, to come through that." (B1 p.6).*

But of course if we are to take on board others' comments and beliefs it does lean to being top down and even towards dictating their vision. There is no doubt from their demeanour and body language within the interview (ON3) that this respondent believes wholeheartedly that what is being said reflects their approach and belief in strong communication to influence people, to take them along

willingly on the journey of change. However, observation and others' discourse does evidence a frustration and surprise on the part of this respondent if people appear to be acting against or to be acting too slowly within the change process. They appear to not understand, or perhaps not want to understand, when other senior leaders within the team do not respond or take positive action to bring about changes that they believed were agreed.

And yet this respondent expects senior leaders to challenge and question within discussions where the direction of travel is going for aspects of these complex changes. He refers to the need for senior leadership roles to include a championing role for their own service areas.

*"... your preparedness to champion the cause of your place and of your service or your function or the discipline that you're leading on, where that needs to be challenged." (B1 p.6).*

In this context they are describing how they expect other senior leaders to defend their services in difficult times. This defence of a section's position the respondent expects to be against themselves as well as defending their 'corner' with other senior leaders.

Overall then, the construct theory of communication as a leadership role is viewed as very important, and that importance increases when leading complex change. However, what the analysis takes me to is that of a real communication issue within the senior leadership team. From this we could take the position, as others have, that the respondent concerned needs to undertake further reflective learning on their approach to communication and their relationships within the senior team, perhaps utilising an 'honest broker' to support that. But I believe that there is a fundamental shared responsibility across and within the team for individuals to address their own behaviours as well.

Courage should be taken to seek to develop open and honest discourse when these difficult areas of complex change are discussed. In transactional analysis terms looking at what appears to be the normative behaviour is reliant on manipulation and game playing on the part of some members of the senior team. What is termed as 'stamp collecting' or keeping score of emotional wins, will occur as a matter of course and within that the people who are subjected to this manipulation will always feel as though the rug has been pulled out from under

their feet. The result of this is invariably frustration and anger when what one believes to be the truth, in this case full support for a position and action, is actually not the case.

Other respondents talked more generally about the need for good communication skills to be utilised within the leadership of change.

*"And they're all things that you would expect in terms of clarity of direction: high visibility of the leadership team and the [REDACTED] and the team and their consistency of message, continuous positive feedback about the quality of work so a lot of reassurance, a lot of communication – always having to work on communication to make sure people get the right message." (B2 p.2).*

Here the focus of communication is about making sure that the direction for the council is understood. Communication is also achieved through high visibility of a leader which enables consistency of messages as well as continuous positive feedback. It is also linked to reassurance, reassurance that everything will be all right and with that recognition of the fear of change particularly in relation to the

extent and complexity of the change process the local authority is working to achieve. I think it also alludes to the development of the follower concept, where leadership can only happen where there are followers of that leader. The alternative would be leadership within a vacuum.

The same respondent talks about using every opportunity for clear communication to happen and then goes on to talk about using a 'mantra' for repetition of that focus.

*"You know the mantra of a child focussed service and a pupil centred school delivery? You just have to keep reminding people that's why they're here and keep them on track and not to get distracted by all these other things."*

(B2 p.4).

Others felt that communication also involved challenge and that involving people in that discourse led to positive developments within the change process.

*"Partly I suppose it's about peer challenge, it's about individual challenge."*

(B3 p.10).



*"Information came out for discussion at, say, Senior Leadership Team and the Assistant Directors were involved in a lot of the discussions behind it (developing the new operating model for the authority) as it evolved." (B3 p.14).*

This comment refers to the involvement of the wider senior leadership team in developing the change concepts and engaging them through discussions in order to bring them on board with the Changing Our Council programme. The change programme was initially instigated and developed within the Corporate Management Team with the support of external consultants. More of this process is discussed in the construct theory on leading change.

## **4.9 On Engaging People (beyond 'telling')**

I decided to include this as a separate construct theory because although it involves communication it speaks to the ethos and purpose of that communication as an integral part of the leadership of change. If you like it goes beyond telling as the construct name suggests. It also acts as a bridge to the following construct theories of working together with staff and with partners.

I begin with the view of one respondent who voiced a desire for a collegiate approach to leadership stating clearly that it was important to involve social work staff throughout.

*"It was helpful that we've always been able to include the social workers; we've had a good reputation in terms of training staff development, innovation, particularly in areas of diversity. " (A2 p. 4)*

This is taken further by the next respondent:

*"We need to make sure that we engage people in the leadership process."*  
(B1 p.5).

This leads me to think of people being allowed to join in with the leaders as opposed to developing shared or distributed leadership models. It says quite clearly 'I am the leader, you are not, but you may join me'. This links to the statement below.

*".... take people on a journey that makes sense of all the things you're asking them to do and engaging them with." (B1 p.5).*

This confirms to me that this respondent views themselves as the leader who takes others on the journey. It does beg the question of whether they choose who goes on the journey with them. Do they choose who they engage with and when? Therefore choosing who to exclude and who to include and is this part of having an agile leadership, choosing to recruit or remove team members as the situation demands or the unintended outcomes dictate. I follow this thread further later in the chapter.

The following respondent discusses the ethos of engaging people, bringing in the principles of empathy and compassion. This is particularly in relation to staff and supporting them through difficult times of change and the pain of job losses as the services reduce.

*".... actually ensuring that there is empathy in what you do, and there is compassion in what you do, especially when taking staff through this difficult time." (B2 p.5).*

The statement here recognises the importance of relationships and engaging emotionally with people in times of change. However, the following statement puts that into the context of operating for the good of the organisation overall.

Whilst encompassing compassion with empathy and ensuring that this ethos is central to engaging with people there is still an expectation that all will work towards the good of the organisation.

*"You know you have to be directive and sometimes you have to be quite assertive if people are deviating from what the vision and the ethos is – you have to bring people in and they don't like it. Sometimes, you know, they will make their own choice about that but I think at the heart of all this is confidence"* (B2 p. 5).

Here the respondent discusses keeping a focus on direction and at the same time being aware of potential blockages to change. They are willing to guide and support people back on track as well as having the confidence to deal differently with resistance.

A further respondent supports the engagement of staff as well; this within the context of challenging others as well as being challenged themselves. They are discussing engaging people in the discourse of achieving effective and efficient delivery of services.

*"So you know, you can't argue against that (engaging people) at all. I think we've got to embrace it and use it to our advantage." (B3 p. 19).*

Engaging with people then involves using communication within an ethos of empathy and compassion. This supports them and encourages them join in with the change process. The next two construct theories take this engagement work further still within the overall concept of communication. Working together with staff followed by working together with partners describes how communication develops from information giving to engaging with as an iterative process towards developing both distributed and shared leadership.

#### **4.10 On Working Together (with staff)**

In this section of the analysis I have deliberately separated working together with staff from working together with partners. If readers recall I consider that there is a clear difference between distributed leadership and shared leadership. The construct theory on working together with staff I feel leads to the development of distributed leadership.

This is where there is leadership usually within a line management framework, with the leader retaining the ultimate responsibility for what actions take place,

alongside the impact these actions engender. The staff shares in that leadership role but in a distributed way. That is the leadership role is distributed through the organisational structure. It can be given or taken. The important aspect here is that the overall leader within the structure retains the responsibility and accountability. The concept of 'distributed' acknowledges the power relationships within hierarchical structures. It results in the leader holding the reins irrespective of whether this is loosely or tightly.

This construct theory then looks at working together with staff, building teams and supporting them to take on responsibility for delivering change within their service areas. This is the action that moves the organisation towards a distributed leadership model.

*"If you have leadership styles where, you know your concern, you know, it's about giving people confidence that you have personal confidence that this can happen, that we can do what we need to do – and then, you know, this is tough but it's not rocket science and there are ways through this and we work together, we focus on our priorities, we allocate our resources*

*productively and efficiently and we stick to the script and we can get to where we need to get to.” (B1 p.4).*

This reflects a leadership style which is focused on getting people, in this case staff, to work together. It discusses the confidence of a leadership which gives staff confidence to focus on priorities, work with the resources available. The terminology of 'sticking to the script' to me means that we have a clarity of leadership around which the team gathers, with confidence in them as a leader and confidence in themselves to take on responsibility and get the job done.

The next respondent talking about working together with staff, discusses achieving this through putting people first, giving a priority to staff and caring for them. The resultant teamwork then delivers better services.

*“Having an eye for detail, putting people first in the organisation, you always have to do that. One of the fundamental principles of running a service, because we know if you put people first they will then run a better service to*

*our children and families. It's about keeping focused on why we're here; it's about not getting distracted by some of these things."* (B2 p.2).

The following draws out the way leaders build a team. It is predicated on the context of not being a person who can do it all and recognises the strength of working together in a team.

*"You mustn't be a one trick pony, it's really, really important that you, you know, that you build a set of skills around you, you demonstrate through your actions that you value the people around you to come together and form a team that own the vision and work with you to shape and deliver that."* (B1 p.8).

This relates to how you recruit and support the best mix of skills for the job that needs to be achieved. Through valuing staff they can form a team that can then jointly own the vision. This sounds simple, but is of course much more complex.

There have been two major reorganisations at the senior management level (D54 and D31). The first was in response to the work-stream as part of the Changing



Our Council programme and the second was in response to further savings required to be found last year. This gave an opportunity to review roles and for the senior leadership to develop those areas of strength which would be required to continue to take the change programme forward. It also, of course, gave others the opportunity to leave the organisation. This could have included those who had or were in the process of disengaging with the organisation because they did not agree with the direction the organisation was travelling in. I suspect this to be true, and have clear evidence of one example of this happening. There is also some evidence of others following this route, alongside views that there still remain a few in the structure who they feel should consider this route (C3, C5, C7, C8 and C9).

Building a set of skills around you as a leader does make me begin to consider the question of 'to what effect?' The next statement does start to introduce the distributive leadership discussed at the beginning of this construct.

*"... bring people with you and that you actually want the people you bring with you to bring others with them in their own teams, and this is to be an inclusive process." (B1 p.8).*

Furthermore, it introduces the reliance on the team to have the responsibility through distributed leadership to make sure that others that they lead and manage buy into the overall vision to achieve the changes. However, there is real concern voiced from other respondents that this does not happen. One respondent went so far as to express a view that a few members of the corporate team went out of their way not to take that forward, to the detriment of the whole change programme (C7).

Others have taken a more person centred approach to working together with staff.

*"... continuous positive feedback" and "a lot of reassurance" (B2 p. 2).*

To me this is a timely reminder that part of the leadership role when supporting staff to work together, there needs to be that relationship development. It isn't just about keeping them on track with the vision and direction, it is about being person centred and valuing the contribution that staff make to the overall organisation. After all how often do we hear the mantra of 'our staff teams are our biggest asset' and yet forget to treat them as such?

This is reflected in further comments where the discourse moves to staff teams developing the change models for themselves.

*"It's not helpful to have it done to [you] ; it has to be generated through the services themselves." (B3 p.20).*

I understand this to be about relationship building with staff so that they are fully involved in any review work and fully supported to achieve through that process.

The same respondent discusses this further.

*"... making sure that those relationships are right and enable and encourage that [relationship building] to be done in a supportive and non-judgemental way." (B3 p.20).*

One respondent also identifies that besides working with staff to solve problems there is a need to also consider the detractors.

*"In gathering people around you to help solve the problem, whoever they are, it's really important to bring into the conversation both the champions and/or the early adopters, whatever you want to call them. And the detractors or the resisters or the blockers up to a point. There's no point*

*spending a lot of time on those that are really just almost on principle  
obstructive, but unless you deal with some of your barriers, you won't get to  
understand." (B7 pp.7-8).*

This leads us to consider the resisters to change as well as those who step up ready and able to tackle it. It relates to the need to look at behaviour change. One respondent earlier in this analysis discussed the need to bring people back inline if they strayed from the agreed direction. This statement goes further in discussing those that actually resist change which they feel needs to be addressed and dealt with. There is further discussion of this within the construct theory on leading change.

A final comment on working together with staff focuses attention on systems and processes. Here the respondent feels that these are integral to the organisation.

*"The leadership agenda is to make sure that the systems and the processes  
and the workings of our organisations enable our staff throughout the  
organisation to do the job that they're supposed to do as effectively and  
efficiently as possible." (B3 p.7).*

I believe that the focus here is about systems and processes that enable staff to feel safe within their working environment. I do not mean in the sense of safe from attack, but safe from getting things wrong or being accused of such. It is a further reference to looking after staff and is meant to reflect a person centred approach, relating as it does to a social care approach. However, systems and processes on their own do not promote working together without that ethos being integral to a leadership approach

#### **4.11 On Working Together (with partners)**

This section explores how relationship building with partners can support the development of shared leadership as opposed to distributed leadership. I consider that shared leadership is where leaders take individual and collective responsibility for leadership with no one leader holding the overall responsibility for the change processes. It is a leadership of equals working together towards a common goal. The overall responsibility and accountability remains with the one leader or group of leaders where a shared leadership role is in action.

The discussion focuses on the main partners of schools and health within the children's services arena.

*"The number of headteachers that have said to us "Oh you know [REDACTED], I'm thinking about becoming an Academy" and they think that, that we or I take it personally and I just say "Why, you've got to think what's in the right interest of the school, if you think it's better for them, then that's absolutely fine and our commitment to partnership working doesn't diminish in any way" and sometimes schools are a bit taken aback by that response and you think well why would you give a different response – and that's about being confident in those relationships, being able to share the leadership in order to achieve common goals." (B2 p.5).*

This leader embraces partnership working and is confident in a shared leadership role. They recognise the autonomy of schools and headteachers. They go on to say:

*"I don't feel at all threatened by schools becoming academies and I don't think the Authority should either because of the strength of partnerships we've got with the headteachers." (B2 p.5).*

There is a confidence in the strength of that relationship with schools. This is correctly held and was evidenced by the most recent inspection report where the local authority was judged as 'outstanding' for its partnership working (D68).

*"It is challenging and you have to, particularly on the free school agenda, not be phased by perhaps some of the players or what free schools potentially could bring in terms of de-stabilising strategic planning certainly for places but you really have to go that extra mile of embracing those people and taking them with you so it doesn't de-stabilise that kind of coherence in creating more school places." (B2 pp.5-6).*

Again this respondent is clear about the reasons for those relations and how working together fosters that sharing of leadership.

*"So there's more local ownership and control over not only budgets but how they can do things which I suppose is the parallel to what we've got is the Clinical Commissioning Groups. Though I guess they are probably more constrained than the Academies will be because there are fewer freedoms about how they can deliver and what they can deliver." (B5 p.6).*

Here the comparison is made between the managing groups of General Practitioners (GPs) and schools. Both are autonomous of the local authority and the Primary Care Trust. Academies are seen to have more freedoms, but are still directly controlled by central government so for them it is more about centralisation. Where it used to be central government managing relationships with schools through the local authority, the move to Academisation of schools is viewed as moving their relationship with the local authority to one side. However, by working together and developing confident relationships a partnership approach which supports shared leadership has been developed.

*“(That’s interesting because) that’s exactly the opposite of what they’re trying to do with CCGs – they are diminishing the central control and giving them local control so that’s a really interesting polar opposite in terms of leadership.” (B5 p.6).*

However, the concept of shared leadership through those relationships with the local authority and other partners in the Children's Trust remains.



*"I think that is really important – what's really refreshing is that the GPs who are newly involved are really up for it and it's keeping that, almost naive, engagement and they've just got a real role about community leadership as well because they are still embedded in their communities and the person who is on the Children's Trust, the [REDACTED] GP, they understand the real issues around what are the biggest things for children in [REDACTED] and I think it is educating them and developing them and not expecting them to understand what their role is straight away." (B5 p.18).*

Although this statement can appear to be rather patronising in making assumptions about GPs not being able to understand their role straight away, the respondent does recognise the community leadership value of GPs. This perceived need to 'educate' them will enable that relationship and shared leadership role to develop and strengthen.

#### **4.12 On Reflective Leadership**

The data collected from interviews included some clear reflective work on leadership. I struggled with the concept of developing the construct theory for leadership in general terms, after all the case study focuses on the leadership

within the local authority and overall the leadership of change. Furthermore the analysis was about deconstructing the concept of leadership. However, there is rich data here which is reflective of how leaders see their leadership role and the context of that.

I have therefore brought together within this section those reflections of the leadership at that moment time. Respondents discuss how they are operating now in the midst of change. Later on I explore the focus of the leadership of change as these senior leaders look at how through their focus on complex change they are future building for children and young people in the district.

I begin with some of the reflections of change in relation to the introduction of the Children's Act (HM Government, 2004). What I view as the beginning of future building as a more gentle change, a linear change in some ways before the more recent plethora of what some see as manic change.

*"Dedicated effort was made across all the parties to get an understanding  
that you need to get off the back foot with the protective services – and by*

*that I mean early intervention as well, and I think it's the early intervention edge, – the consensus around that, that resulted in changes, – that has helped us there.” (A2 p.3).*

This relates to the bringing together of all services for children and young people. However, within that process there was a focus on developing preventative work. This was about intervening early in children and young people's lives. The ethos was and remains so, that taking children into care may save their lives, but ultimately this is a bad outcome for them. Broadly speaking it was an officer led development arising from the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes from national developments with involvement from the newly formed Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS).

The Children Act (2004) also put into place clear roles for senior leadership, both at the officer level for the Director of Children's Services as well as for the Lead Member or politician who would take responsibility for policy development. This meant a changing relationship between members and officers.

*"It meant officers being able to show where they had ability to engage with elected members– elected members have a positive part in it as well – but I think it was largely officer led, it was clearly seen you need to move beyond gate-keeping elected members and keeping them at bay and just saying well this is what we do councillors, you can't do this, you can't do that." (A2 pp.3-4).*

The clarity of role and the differences between one role and another enabled a changing relationship, moving from briefing members on what was felt to be relevant by the officer leadership to working closer together where officers became more involved in leadership through influence. It also developed into closer working, working together for the common good. Previously this relationship was more 'arms-length'.

This change in relationship has resulted in more complexity, not only between officers and members, but also between local authority leadership and partners.

*"We've moved from leadership with authority to constantly re-inventing consent and redesigning engagement." (A2 p. 5)*

This comment particularly relates to the changing relationships with schools.

Within the case study area a deliberate decision was taken to engage with schools irrespective of their structures. This enabled the development of that shared leadership role discussed above. However, some local authorities 'divorced' schools that converted to academy refusing to engage with them at all.

Furthermore the 'constantly re-inventing consent' speaks to the changing role of elected members. This confirms the change from elected members being viewed as 'the council' and the 'leader' with its associated deference, to a leader among many 'constantly redesigning engagement'.

However, one clear role of elected member leadership is that of setting budgets.

This is an easy task when the economy is flourishing, but not so easy in a recession.

Yet all leaders want to ensure the success of their work, whether well-resourced or not.

*"So getting onto the agenda of how do you resource structure and how do you actually have a service that makes a difference to the community and how do you actually make the elected members feel they're supporting something that's has some prospective of achieving something, take some pride in it." (A2 p.4).*

Even though the relationships between officers and members have changed, the expectation remains that officer leadership will support elected members to meet the needs of the community. It appears that members still require convincing that those they are allowing to influence them will achieve a direction of policy which enables them to be successful.

The role of leaders as they come together is one of relationship building, a sense of nurturing each other. There is still a sense of layers of leadership-within-shared-leadership about the senior leadership layer, which includes the elected member, having an overview of the whole system of services. Whereas, there are other autonomous leaders who may be focused on parts of that system, but sharing the responsibility for outcomes and accountability for those.

*"I see our role as nurturing, co-operation, providing analysis; it's about the relationship making and influencing aspects of that." (A2 p.11).*

Here there is reference to the changed role of leadership from that of authority to that of relationship building and influence. It recognises that there is leadership of the system as a whole. A complexity of which involves working across a system which also has autonomous and independent systems within it.

*"I look to a future where we have far more interdependency between schools. The local authority is a key part of that partnership, they deliver with the local authority, the local authority does have a role in holding them to account, challenging them, providing services that are effective, you know it takes more than an old LEA to deliver change to get better outcomes for children, it requires an understanding of the changes in the community, what it's going to take to tackle the legacy of structural unemployment over 20/30 years and the anti-education culture that's taken root in a number of communities." (A2 pp. 11-12).*

Part of the local authority role is leading the system, holding others to account.

Here the changing relationship with schools means that the leadership role must also work across the autonomous parts of the system which develops that interdependency between them. It relates to schools supporting each other to improve, which of course the various partnerships between schools, influenced by the local authority is seeking to do just that. Although the respondent refers to the local authority challenging and holding others, particularly schools, to account, the ultimate challenge and accountability is through the inspection and regulation of the different parts of that system.

It also speaks to the systems thinking and the overview that enables to inform the various parts of the system. This is the leadership role of knowing the community and its systemic issues which need to be addressed.

An example was given of where a school had issues with social and racial cohesion because of some of the decisions it had taken. This led to a direct intervention by the local authority senior leadership with the school and the local community.

*"It actually showed that the role of the local authority with its understanding of the different community beliefs, its commitment to the overall life and wellbeing of the community, [of] which education is a huge part, played its role in bringing common sense to something that could have turned into an awful row." (A2 p.12).*

This example evidences that the role of leadership is not about relationship making and influencing between a local authority and a school. It also involves supporting those relationships to develop and mature between the parts of the system.



In this reflective work on leadership there was a recognition that changes in leadership roles have taken place within the change process and perhaps more importantly because of them.

*"The leadership skills that we need in a fast moving, complex environment where there's a lot of change happening on lots of different fronts at the same time, are very different to the leadership styles that are most effective in a steady state where funding, and where all the variables are pretty constant or predictable." (B1 p.2).*

Having recognised the need for different leadership skills in the fast moving environment of change the respondent went on to reflect on the expectations of senior leadership teams to achieve this.

*"You need people who are really clear thinkers and can take decisive action in a way that fits within the sort of framework that you've set as a leader but can actually really motor and do the doing." (B1 p. 7)*

This speaks to distributive leadership rather than the shared leadership of autonomous parts of a system. It reflects the power retained by aspects of leadership within a hierarchical structure of an organisation. This is reinforced by the following statement.

*"You value the people around you to come together and form a team that own the vision and work with you to shape and deliver that." (B1 p. 8)*

I think the key words here are about 'work with you'. It affirms the view that there is one overall leader, the central figure to it all. It appears to be a direct contradiction to the previous respondent and their reflections on leadership. However, this respondent is in a different position within the organisation and this is what is reflected here.

This respondent was one of only two who referred to the leadership tools of agility, acuity and alignment as integral to leading change. The second person who referred to it did so as an afterthought at the end of the interview, going so far as to pass along further information on it after the interview, asking it to be included within the overall transcript. This leads me to believe that as tools for change, they are held in high esteem by this respondent only. It does not appear to cause them any concern that this may be the case, which I believe speaks to a confidence of leadership and one which expects to be alone and at the forefront of leadership overall. They were clear that these tools enabled them to:

*"Move things around – flexing the structure to achieve the longer term vision." (B1 p. 23)*

This was important to them and I believe that it relates to being able to undertake structural reviews and changes to leadership roles which enable the senior leadership team to respond differently within complex change. It is indeed a challenge and not a quick process due to the requirement of extensive consultation with staff and unions to achieve them.

The next respondent reflected on leadership in a way which portrayed that they are comfortable and confident with their leadership role as well as change.

*"There is always some major development happening." (B2 p.1).*

This speaks of continuous change. They refer to

*"the need for high visibility as a leader" (B2 p. 2)*

in order to be seen and recognised as a leader. And furthermore that

*"part of good leadership is keeping people focused on the vision and the values and the principles of that" (B2 p. 3).*

The acceptance of the need for change and their comfort with that I believe evidences a confident and clear leadership role which enables the focus on longer term goals. That longer term focus also enables the change to not only be successful but to also achieve success. They then go on to discuss strategic leadership.

*"The role of strategic leadership when you've got all those big changes is to not get too bogged down by the detail and make sure you do keep that strategic overview". (B2 p.3).*

The retention and focus on the strategy to achieve the vision also enables the respondent to be *"blatantly opportunistic"* (B2 p. 3) and approach which has enabled them to *"develop further the integration of services and pathways for the health and well-being of children and families in our early years"* as changes in the way health services are being delivered and managed nationally. I conclude the reflections here of this respondent with the acknowledgement that leadership styles need to be varied and flexible.

*"I think in terms of leadership style, I think you have to have a whole sweep of different styles to suit the occasion and the way you engage with Chief*

*Exec or health organisations will be different to how you engage with  
frontline staff.” (B2 p. 5)*

Here we have the comment and recognition that having a range of leadership styles and responses underpins that confidence and comfort with change however complex that may be.

The next respondent begins their reflections on leadership with expectations.

*“The leadership qualities and the expectations of staff at all levels of the  
organisation around leadership I think is actually quite, well very important.”  
(B3 p.4).*

Here they are clear that a leader should respond to and meet the expectations of others, particularly staff. The discussions here were in the context of the differences between leadership and management and what you would expect at different levels of the organisation.

*“I think there are leadership roles at all levels in the organisation, so a front  
line leader has some leadership role as well.... But they might be different*

*and there might be a different emphasis and different consequences.” (B3 p.3).*

Within the exploration of the expectations of staff for leadership they explore and reflect on whether there is also a leadership role for staff at different levels of the organisation. Here it is more about distributed leadership, which is reflected in the comment about ‘different emphasis and different consequences’. I did not find that surprising here as leadership beyond the senior team within an organisation is generally distributed as opposed to the shared leadership of partners and equals. They have recognised that they work within a wider corporate structure and this comment brings the staff with them into that structure and not separate to it.

*“ Some things you're born with and some things are thrust upon you and some things you can learn.” (B3 p. 4)*

Here the common debate of people being born to be leaders is acknowledged and tempered with leadership being ‘thrust upon you’ and finally acknowledging that aspects of leadership can be learnt. I don't intend to enter that debate here. I would have had to undertake research with a different focus to contribute to that. However, I found it interesting that a newcomer to the senior leadership team

would reflect on leadership in such a way. It led me to consider the confidence level of the respondent, not just in leadership terms but also in terms of confidence in their engagement in the research work.

*"Leadership is one of the absolute key elements fundamental to what we do day in day out actually." (B3 p.4).*

Having affirmed that as a leader this is part of their day to day work, their confidence to engage in the research appeared to increase (ON5).

They were then able to reflect on the difference between a leadership role within an organisation and the management role within the same.

*"It (leadership) is around decision making and judgement so that managers make decisions but leaders, this maybe a flippant statement, but leaders make judgements." (B3 pp. 4-5).*

They went on to discuss what that meant to them.

*"My fundamental responsibility and role is to show leadership in terms of my department but also collectively and corporately around the corporate agenda." (B3 p. 5).*

There is a clear role description here which recognises working corporately as well for the Department. Furthermore, they go on to recognise that their leadership role is also across the system.

*"I feel that as a [leader], I have a responsibility as well as a leader in terms of the district and that would, from my point of view link me into roles and responsibilities across [REDACTED]." (B3 p. 5).*

They are firm that this also requires them "to be able to show leadership by example" and to able to deliver:

*"... creative, innovative solutions, integrated approaches with other departments, partners outside of the organisation, all the 'total place' stuff around understanding your place, understanding the resources available, how do we do things differently and better but when you are pushed in that situation ...." (B3 p. 22).*



They recognise leadership for place shaping; developing markets for personalisation as a way of keeping people independent (B3 p. 28). And finally reflect upon the role of the local authority and the current debate within the change agenda.

*“The role ultimately of the local authority which you know, is it provider of services or is it commissioner and place shaper in terms of our model.”* (B3 p. 28).

As the local authority is forced to make even more extensive savings over the next three years (£115 million has been mooted) there is a new debate and a tension for Departments about whether this means we should cease to deliver services ourselves. This is related to the concept passed down by national government that local authority services are more costly to deliver than they would be from within the private sector or the voluntary sector. But whether this is true or not, difficult decisions will need to be made about what the local authority will cease to deliver directly and how any risks inherent to that can be mitigated. This will be a highly challenging period for the local authority leadership, particularly because it will

retain legislative and regulatory requirements in some service areas such as children's services and adult social care.

However, if you have taken on a leadership role within the local authority in order to instigate change does the reflection on leadership generally lead to other conclusions? The following respondent reflects on these aspects.

*"We talk now in a position of hindsight, having gone through change since the day I walked through this door." (B4 p. 2).*

This is the beginning of the story of a senior leader joining the organisation with the express purpose of instigating change. From the very first engagement with the council they have been involved in change. It was a considered and thought through change programme. This I believe can be compared with the planned changes undertaken elsewhere in respect of developing and delivering an integrated children's service.

*"I think that's the most important piece of context actually because when I came toward the council the changes I wanted to instigate was delivery of [REDACTED], delivery of the [REDACTED] based upon a model not everybody had in mind and I thought would progress." (B4 p. 2).*

They joined the local authority as a senior leader with the express intention of delivering a model of change that was developed through their own academic experience.

*"In 2006 I'd just finished studying [REDACTED] under the business floor and their projections were at that stage was that the collapse was coming." (B4 p. 2).*

They are very clear that their academic study was the platform which drew them to the local authority to develop a change programme based on the model they had developed. Furthermore, they were also aware that the economic recession was on the horizon, but I did not get any sense that having accepted that as the context of the times they had considered the complexity and range of demands this would transfer to the local authority to manage.

What they felt clearly was that for leadership:

*"the issue often is of capability" (B4 p. 3)*

and that overall the success for leaders generally came down to capability of the individual leaders to make things happen.

*"I identified that there were two areas of change in this department. The first area of change was the fact that I wanted to shift the culture of how we worked because the department has pulled together from many other smaller departments and it never existed in this right so there was the previous department: design, planning, place or something of that nature and there was the department of development, housing – either way they, I think there was probably about, it feels like there was probably fourteen Assistant Directors and we now have four – a massive shift in terms of scale."*

(B4 p.4).

There was personal pride evident in relation to this achievement and this was observed within the interview (ON6) and this comes out in further descriptions of this self-instigated change programme.

*"I'd started a programme called [REDACTED] and there's a bit*

*how the department had a rethink about what was good and it was actively*

*becoming one of the best [REDACTED] departments in this country, albeit we started in 2008, and we went fantastically well as we controlled it." (B4 p.4).*

This is a personally owned change programme, with a high level of personal investment in making it work based as it is on a model they considered to be highly innovative, which it was. The emphasis on *'I'd started a programme'* reflects this personal commitment arising as it does from an academic model they had developed previously. I think it is also pertinent to reflect on the use of the words 'as we controlled it'. The respondent was developing evidence that their model was working and their ambition for it is very evident.

*"We managed it, we reshaped all the teams, we reshaped all the culture, we reshaped all the ambition, we changed the nature of staying in relationships, we took money out – it was fantastically, brilliantly healthy, the place was buoyant with ambition, buoyant with energy and full of self-directional based leadership." (B4 p.4).*

However, these were achievements within an environment of plenty, working within a balanced budget overall with the additional external funding flowing through from

government for targeted projects. The change programme took place prior to the coalition government coming to power.

The change programme was expressed as a strong achievement in changing culture as well as changing historical leadership within the Department to that of what can be viewed as distributed leadership. Furthermore this 'freeing up' of leadership and distributing it across the Department led to energy, buoyancy and ambition for the leaders involved. A question I look at later is 'could that ambition and commitment be sustained when change becomes more demanding and complex?'

Other respondents reflected on the leadership in the corporate arena, and the way those leaders worked.

*"I suppose what I have seen is a bit of other people trying to focus in on those areas and I think it is interesting because I think that you've seen people like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] having to deliver what they are having to deliver as well as being corporate around delivering those fiscal changes but being absolutely clear that the areas they are in are still priority areas. I suppose*

*that's been quite an interesting focus in terms of [REDACTED] as well because ultimately those children and young people and adults are both priority [REDACTED] areas at the beginning and end of life." (B5 p.3).*

Here working corporately and observing the corporate team there is an acknowledgement and agreement that some areas of service delivery are priorities for the council and this has an impact on how leaders will deal with complex change.

*"In terms of [REDACTED] leadership around that, are you seeing a bit more panic – I suppose when I came six years ago there was a much more lavish style of leadership around what we did, how we did things – and people have stopped doing it and I think that [REDACTED] having to focus in on [our priorities]and in a way it's interesting because some of the CMTs we've had where [REDACTED] hasn't been there or has gone, I think the leadership of CMT is now much closer and people work better as a team when [REDACTED] is not in the room – which is fascinating as a bit of an outsider but just watching – and it is more about: with [REDACTED] there is almost a desperate ' We have got to sort this out, we have to be seen to change it' and when [REDACTED] gone there's the*

*actual how do we make this happen in terms of leading the organisation in terms of selling this to tens of thousands of people and the taxpayers of*

*██████████?" (B5 pp.4-5).*

This reflects a naivety of this respondent. They describe a dysfunctional team which they believe is down to one person and ignore the responsibility others have within the team, including themselves, towards making sure that the leadership of the council works well.

*"I think there is power building going on where people might think there's a bit of empire building going on." (B5 p.12).*

I want to respond – of course there is! But I think this is a very serious comment, and one which was reflected as a surprise conclusion. The lack of teamwork alluded to above would lend itself to people defending their own services. That position of defence leads easily on to positioning oneself within the organisation to develop your own power base. This in turn can then be interpreted as 'empire building'.



When further discussing leadership the respondent focused on commissioning and contracting and how changing the way this role was implemented would give an opportunity to develop leadership.

*"I think it will give us the opportunity to do some leadership around focusing on the great preventative stuff – everything is just lost in block contracts that one person, will say: 'Oh that's only a little bit of this massive contract with the [REDACTED] and we knew it was a really important bit and they wouldn't let us over specify the contracts – they knew you cannot put too much in so I think it is going to give us a real opportunity to provide some leadership around health and children.' "* (B5 pp.18-19).

Although the discussion talks about commissioning, the core of the approach is actually purchasing. Looking at how we can purchase services through contracts with others that are more focused and specific, so that the leadership can achieve more value for money including flexibility of delivery. It reflects a very general view of leadership and makes no attempt to describe that leadership or how it can grasp this agenda for changed approaches.

The next respondent is thoughtful with considered responses to the issue of leadership. They began by discussing leadership styles in the context of partnership working.

*"There is a model of collaboration that's really, really important for us to understand as a leadership style." (B8 p.2).*

Working together with partners they felt was instrumental to leadership for the local authority and they felt that this was an area that the leadership was changing.

*"We can actually build in a much better way forward with leadership through influence and negotiation rather than full control." (B8 pp.2-3).*

They saw this as moving away from previous models of command and control towards relationship building through influence and negotiation.

They reinforce this change by going on to say:

*"Where I think probably previously the Council leadership hasn't had to worry about that so much it's been very much we're a key leader, we're a key leadership in the district – which of course we are, but I think we've probably*

*moved away from that command and control into much more collaborative style which will help us in the future.” (B8 p. 4).*

The respondent felt that partnership working in the past was always engaged in from a local authority perspective – “What can you offer us? As resources start to diminish the leadership needs to look at new ways of working to develop better use of resources and persuading or influencing people to work with the council around common goals. They also recognise that the local authority remains a key leader, but not the only one.

They continue in this vein:

*“I think obviously for local authorities we have to completely rethink the way we do things and the way we do business and I think for me it does take a very different style of leadership.” (B8 p.2).*

They feel that developing a different type of leadership is essential to meet new challenging times. It involves developing common understandings for working together beyond organisational boundaries.

*"The ability of leaders to get people to see that common understanding on the table so that they can come together through their leadership roles to achieve it is quite crucial." (B8 pp.3-4).*

Furthermore

*"So to me there's two distinct issues around that leadership, one is the buy-in to the achieving the outcome which maybe you can say – is that the easier cultural shift, getting the collaboration and others accepting they've got that joint responsibility with ourselves? – although we do still have that role of regulation assurance don't we, we can't lose that, we can never negotiate that away." (B8 p.4).*

Here the respondent considers how the change in leadership style also causes a cultural shift. This I think is true, moving from command and control to achieving buy-in across partners with an acceptance of joint responsibility as opposed to the previous singular one of the local authority, leads the council to value partners in a more obvious way. It demonstrates to others that there is a reduction in the superior approach previously utilised. However it also recognises the tension of the accountability which is retained by the local authority for inspection and regulation.

They introduce the concept of creativity in relation to change.

*"I think when it's a resources discussion on the table I think that's again where maybe we do need to think more creatively as leaders about the options that are on the table to do that." (B8 p. 5).*

However, holding discussions with others around how *their* resources, as opposed to *ours*, should be deployed can become problematic. It introduces tensions which become more pronounced when leaders start to explore how resources can be shared and risks a polarisation of positions with a fear of the loss of control.

Leaders then become more dependent on their relationships and the ability to influence each other's views.

They go on to discuss this approach within the corporate arena of the local authority where they feel that the changed way of working with others will facilitate a changed way of working across departments. This they feel would enable leaders to work towards common corporate goals and move them away from entrenched positions within departmental silos.

*"So previously when we have been in the times of stable budgets and understanding we can still make the change we need within our own arenas*

*and still give up some for the corporate good of the authority we probably haven't been pushed into looking at different financial models of delivery as much." (B8 p.5).*

They recognise that previously the local authority has not experienced the level of cuts that they are finding now. It was easier to be tokenistic before, looking after their own departments first and offering small amounts for the corporate good. I found this interesting and reflective. I felt that it confirmed or at least, led to a greater understanding of the responses from B4 and the emotions which may be underlying for them. I believe that we also have to be aware that the council has never experienced this level of cuts before, so perhaps none of the leaders have the experience to draw upon. All are entering new territory.

They go further and begin to explore how within this complex change programme it might be possible to make systemic change across the district.

*"What's quite interesting for me is now looking much wider at those different investment opportunities for economic growth coming wrapping round this agenda as a way of actually achieving our economic aims for the district but*

*also obviously achieving the outcomes we need for our children and young people as well.” (B8 p.5).*

Again this respondent is trying to weave creativity into the change process, but I sense that they do not really know how they will achieve this. This is confirmed to me through the following statement.

*“And I think what I’m seeing – and I think it’s a very new role even for people like myself corporately who aren’t from a financial background and who’ve come into local government from a number of different ways and experiences to come into the strategic arena – is that some of the answers aren’t always around the specialisms any more of delivering the outcomes – it’s actually the experts in the financial and investment ways of working with even our private sector partners or others in looking at very, very different financial models of service delivery.” (B8 pp.5-6).*

This speaks to a total change in approach. They are discussing the reduced need for specialisms in service delivery. And perhaps that is true. However, I find it interesting that someone from a generic background as this respondent is, would consider that service delivery would not need a specialist knowledge to deliver. Furthermore, the Local Government Association has interpreted that the overall

reduction in resources available to local authorities would lead them to concentrate only on those areas of statutory duty, which predominantly reside within specialist service areas (D44). It feels more to me that this approach would potentially protect the respondent's position for future employment.

The final respondent I consider in this section starts by reflecting on the difficulties of leading change in an area of change they have had no experience in. This relates to the level of savings the local authority has been required to find in the first stages of change. There is a growing awareness that these reductions have not finished yet, and that even more will need to be found in the immediate future.

*"I suppose we were just learning – all of us as leaders and managers – how to see through a completely changed environment where previously we'd have had a lot of investment it was always a decision as to where to put new money there was never a discussion about where to take money out and you've got to be very much led by your principles, you've got to be as open as you can when you can be in terms of your leadership style." (C1 p.4).*



There is recognition of the lack of experience with the leadership of this type of change and the challenge that this involves. They refer to openness in leadership style as well as remaining true to the principles of service delivery. However, it has obviously not been an easy task and they go on to talk about the personal drain that this has caused.

*"That first year was the most difficult in having to see something through in a very task orientated transactional way, you really didn't have much opportunity to transform even though we had some of our work streams really looking at transformational opportunities. Constantly in the background it's the fear, the emotional, dealing with things on a personal leadership level and trying to emotionally engage with people and support them but not get sucked into how awful it all is and we can't really operate anymore and I think there was a danger through all of that process that actually things go into a hiatus and you take your eye off the day-to-day work." (C1 p.5).*

This is a really heart felt response to the experiencing something completely outside of their normal routine of leadership. They are frustrated by undertaking

purely transactional leadership in response to the task orientation towards the process of reduction for staff posts. Furthermore there is an awareness of the need to support staff emotionally through a very difficult time. The fear of change has to be addressed both personally and with others. Overriding all of that is the awareness that service delivery could be adversely affected if they and their staff do not attend to the day-to-day work. Leaders in this situation need to be able to retain the emotional balance in order to manage the stress that this could promote.

#### **4.13 On leading change**

The following analysis explores the leadership of change and moves from the general to the specific whilst attempting to 'get under the skin' of leading change. The change is complex and challenging and this is reflected to differing degrees by the respondents.

The first comment is in relation to the comfort of change, the known aspects that the respondent finds themselves at ease with.

*"Evolving, organic change in terms of on-going improvements to outcomes through developing the Children's Trust model." (A2 p.1).*

The reference is to the continuous change model arising from the Children Act (HM Government, 2004). It requires step change. It is challenging in one respect with the need to work differently to the previously singular response by a local authority. The change process has been taking place over several years and the respondent and partners are comfortable with the concept of progressive improvement.

However, they go onto recognise the extent and complex nature of change since 2010.

*"Well in terms of the approach taken to the children's social care and the protected stuff I think that's less ideological and dogmatically driven than what's been applied to the national centralisation in effect nationalisation of the school service." (A2 p.2).*

They feel that there are fewer issues with the changes in children's social care than they do with regard to the changing school structures which need a different leadership response to respond to. However, they see a greater challenge with regard to what they perceive as the centralisation of schools. This they feel totally

changes the relationship between the local authority and its schools. It is probably the biggest challenge to them.

*"That's left us with, looking at the problems, the needs and demands are greater than they've ever been, the challenges are greater than they've ever been but the ability to make, plan and organise decisions has become diversified but also highly centralised." (A2 p.5).*

Furthermore, they see the new ways of leadership as problematic and reliant on central government. It is viewed as a battle in terms of controlling and running schools between central and local government.

I believe that with the added complexity of severely reducing resources for the local authority the change leadership becomes more difficult. Difficult decisions will have to be made with respect to service delivery. The local authority will soon be in a position where some services will have to cease being delivered.

There have been discussions about developing a new market place to sell services to schools and others, including beyond the borders of the local authority. There is some potential for increased income to balance the budget.

*"One is that they can go out and procure school needs, e.g. education psychology and everything else that they want in the private and third sector or they can rely on the local authority to provide that." (A1 p.4).*

However this is a high risk strategy. There is no guarantee that all of the services will be purchased. Some services can charge more to the community. But there remains the difficulty of the recession and falling wages. Reliance on increased charges or charging at all for services will not necessarily attract the income required.

There are clear ideological differences between local and national policy directions. I cannot assume that this concern for the delivery of services is purely down to local political ambition.

One leader believes that the local authority needs to completely re-think how it operates.

*"(We need ) a real shift in mind-set away from paternalistic, top down, does-of-things-to-people-with-problems, to seeing ourselves getting alongside people, and facilitating them, securing their own wellbeing as individuals and communities." (B1 pp.16-17).*

The change leadership here is exploring the change for the whole approach to how the local authority operates. To date they see this approach as paternalistic.

What they mean by this is that the local authority is the supplier of support and protection. The shift is to working alongside the citizenship to support them to make their own way. To take responsibility for themselves and succeed in achieving their own health and well-being for their own and their family's needs.

This would require a complete change of attitude and approach politically, at officer level and at community level. This is very ideological and dependent on how the leadership of change can achieve this.

Their view is that potentially the council could work more at neighbourhood level.

In doing so they would support local communities to take responsibility for the non-priority areas of local authority service delivery.

*"[We] have real choices about how community action can deal with other things and other non-priority areas..... and for the community to make decisions about those non-priority areas." (B1 p.17).*

This could happen under the Localism Act (HM Government, 2012) however, if there were opportunities for communities to run services there would need to be a groundswell of voluntary action. There is no attraction for the private sector to step in and run services such as leisure centres or libraries. There is no profit for them within these. If there were, a competitive market would have already developed.

The reliance returns again to developing innovation. It speaks to becoming creative within the change process.

*"Even on all the priority issues, we've been making massive reductions in some key areas so we need to think very differently about how we tackle problems and actually we need to be innovative around building*

*relationships with business, with the voluntary sector, with a whole host of other people.” (B1 p.18)*

This statement was made in the context of looking for more creative ways of reducing resource requirements. It contains the recognition that improving the commissioning and procurement processes would at best only achieve efficiency savings. But efficiencies by themselves will not achieve the reductions the local authority faces in the near future.

Two respondents agreed that in order to lead change there was a need to build on the high skill areas which exists within the local authority. Frontline staff need to be empowered to deliver creative solutions (B1 p. 20 and B2 p. 7). The following comment appears to reflect this.

*“The key to the kind of magnitude of the challenge I suppose, for the council, is trying to make sure that those changes are owned by the people who are going to have to implement them and that the whole of certainly the senior team are – have felt – part of that process and engagement in terms of discussing what the options were, what options there were for responding to those challenges of reduced resources of what the final operating model*



*was and were behind it in terms of implementing it because if that wasn't the case then it would be immensely more difficult to implement." (B3 p.13-14).*

This statement summarises how the change programme was planned to operate and achieve change across the council. Several work-streams were put into place. They were developed and agreed across the senior team, so they should have felt part of the process and fully engaged with that. However, the new operating model of centralising back office support roles was met with great resistance, including from within the senior leadership team. It did become problematic to implement. It was in fact changed before implementation and is still not working effectively (C3, C5, C7 and C9).

Others start to explore the leadership of change with the emphasis of the positive.

*"A huge achievement, a huge achievement because actually what we've been asked to do collectively, what the organisation has had to do, has been to reduce resources and at the same time massively change the way it operates and I think doing those two things together has been a massive challenge." (B3 p.15).*

They continue in this vein.

*"I mean I think there are views that actually we'd have had to do some of this if not all of this anyway, we might have done it in different ways and within different timeframes had we not had that immense challenge of finance which was outside of our control." (B3 p.16).*

They felt that changes had to be made with

*"... an absolute imperative to do something radical and different and we collectively have done it." (B3 p.16).*

They reflect as well on the impact of these changes on staff in particularly.

*"There have been some casualties along the way – undoubtedly there have – but by and large we've implemented what we've been asked to implement and you know, that has to tell you something as well, hasn't it really?" (B3 p. 16).*

What I find interesting here is that there is a calm acceptance of loss of staff from the organisation, but what does not come across is the care of staff felt by others and discussed within other construct theories. There is no emotional engagement. And no mention of supporting staff through difficult times of change,

or even putting people first or valuing staff. The respondent does go on to say that they feel the leadership challenge is to embed the change now.

*"The next stage in terms of the leadership challenge is: how do we embed this now?" (B3 p. 16)*

and they go on to state:

*"Part of a leadership challenge now is not to just say let go of it and say 'Right we've done it now that's it', it's actually supporting the staff that remain within the organisation and I think we could have done some of that earlier probably but you know, we were all up against it in terms of what we had to do and how we had to implement it." (B3 p. 17)*

It appears that this respondent feels that the speed of change was a barrier to supporting staff within the process and it is only after the reduction in staffing has been achieved that thought is given to this. However, further statements allude to a much reduced personable approach in comparison to others within the leadership of change. The direct concerns being expressed are actually in relation to workloads of the remaining managers which reduce capacity to deal with future change needs.

*"Having that space and capacity – and actually when you've got reduced managers the risk is that they all become embroiled in the operational day-to-day and then you lose any chance of standing back and having that kind of bigger picture and that strategic thinking. And I think that's quite a risk actually, for us because we've got such a lot of kind of operational demands." (B3 p. 23).*

The context of space and capacity here is about the need to step back and reflect on how the change has gone. I do think however, that the consideration of how managers and leaders were to operate within the slimmed down structure was not addressed at the time. There have been some discussions about new ways of leading and managing staff, but this was some considerable time after the reductions had taken place (D27). This leads to cultural change as well, or rather the absence of any planned approach to it.

They conclude their discussions around this area with a final reflection on capacity and staff.

*"But if you don't free up time then you need other people then to pass that to – and if there aren't as many people in the system, managers in the system*

*then that potentially is a problem. But then you run the risk of not being able to innovate and change and not being able to deliver your vision and articulate your vision and lead the people.” (B23 p. 25).*

For this respondent who has a real commitment to innovation, the lack of capacity within the system is a real concern. The above gives a picture of difficult but well achieved change. However, other data led me to consider if this respondent was as positively engaged with the change process as appears here (C3, C5, C7 and C9) were particularly concerned about various aspects of what they saw as blocking behaviours.

I returned to the beginning of the interview transcript where the respondent was talking about the reasons for their engagement in the local authority. They joined to implement a planned change model. Within that discussion they also discussed the early change processes for the local authority. The initial areas of concern are around the use of 'crisis change' – *“the change model crisis was upon us so the first step for crisis change was there”* (B4 p. 3). This was in direct contrast to the planned change implemented by them on arrival as a senior leader in the organisation.

They felt that there was *"an urgency about it and we went at it quite quickly and that's given the organisation some level of confidence"* (B4 p. 4). The confidence I surmise is in relation to gaining confidence to do it again. Further discussion brought the respondent back to what they perceived to be the start of change for the organisation.

*"If you break it down into the start of change, the model was introduced, and the model was introduced by KPMG and PWC, there are two waves."* (B4 p. 4).

There were two sets of consultants that the local authority used to look at changing the way the organisation was to do things in order to achieve a level of savings and efficiency. The first was Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) but concerns were expressed that their recommendations were not radical enough nor would they save enough resources. The second was KPMG who developed the final operating model with the senior team which was implemented within the Changing Our Council programme. The change programme was put into place to serve two purposes, that of transforming the way the organisation structured itself and to

make considerable savings. The savings required were approximately £80 million at this stage.

*"Actually the corporate change programme was really a decision made that all of the change programmes had to stop." (B4 p. 5).*

Here we have the first indications of real challenge for the respondent. They had by their own admission delivered a change programme across their department which was successful and energising. Now they were being told, by outsiders no less, that a corporate change programme would be more effective. I would imagine that the reaction to this was for this respondent to feel devalued and the successes achieved dismissed. There are strong indications here that they were against the new changing our council programme and were unwilling to engage fully in it.

*"It was a really big shift actually because what that did was it put a brake on change." (B4 p. 5).*

What they are really saying is that it put an end to change for them. It adds to the evidence of disengagement from the corporate approach.

*"People thought well we're only going to do change the corporate way and we all do it the same way and we all have to get ready and we all have to do it the same way, we all have to march in the right direction." (B4 p. 5)*

Corporate working was very difficult for them at this point and was seen as negative overall. Although the interviewee refers to 'we' I consider this to be a euphemism, using the 'royal We' as I certainly did not pick up such a degree of negativity or non-engagement with the corporate change programme from other interviewees.

However, I did have other interviewees who felt strongly that this person was a real barrier to change and 'should be dealt with'. One went so far as to suggest that they should be removed from the organisation all together. This is unfortunate but also concerning that others should feel so strongly.

*"Localised innovation I think, became a little bit frustrating, because people couldn't become entrepreneurial in some respects." (B4 p. 5).*



The respondent felt that local innovation, within departments was halted. I believe, however, that this is more about them feeling that their way of innovation and change was the only way and of course the statement is not true. Other departments did deliver innovative and entrepreneurial change and discussed this passionately (B1, B2, B3 and B8) within the corporate change programme. Perhaps this was despite the change programme. What I have not seen any evidence of is that the change programme had a causal effect in this way.

*"I don't think that was the intention but I think it was the outcome because structure had to be given." (B4 p. 5).*

They refer here to what they view as stopping innovation. But their earlier change programme had structure to it, even if it was a different structure. I consider this was more about the disagreement with the change programme and not about the structure itself. The biggest difficulty that this respondent would have had is that the change programme was managed in the first instance outside of the senior leadership team. Even though this was by a contemporary, it did not reflect the way of developing change, nor the ambitions of, this particular respondent

*"Two consultants that came in, in order to get us to their positions they took a greater position in their view of the scale of budget, and in their opinion of their view of operational structures." (B4 p. 5)*

The change programme did fail to bring in the expected level of savings resulting in greater savings being taken from departments (D19). Further statements from this respondent continue to evidence a total lack of respect and engagement which appears to go back to the original reports of the consultants brought in to support the council in defining a change programme.

This respondent also felt that big assumptions were made which pushed them down a particular direction of change. This included the feeling that the consultants could not and did not understand the business of the organisation the way the senior leaders did.

*"They made big assumptions, those big assumptions then pushed you down a direction of change." And "they could never understand the business the way we who ran it could understand it". (B4 p. 5).*

This appears logical to me: if the consultants didn't know the business then they would make assumptions. However, this respondent did not at the time see it as

their role to help them to understand the business, thus allowing the business case for change to remain unchallenged.

*"What was left out of that was the fact that actually it was the top team change and would bring the organisation which is huge, massive job, with the organisation of the change as well with the top team doing it." (B4 p. 5).*

I find this statement to be a bit naïve. Of course a change programme of this size would be delivered by the top team. The leadership of change would be a primary role for them. The change would be dependent on how the senior team delivered that, how they would engage with staff and others to share that vision and bring others with them.

*"The biggest memory I have of that change programme was the frustration with the second wave of consultants, which was [REDACTED] The frustration I had with them was the fact that I thought they treated me with disregard in terms of my requests for information." (B4 p. 5).*

I think that the disregard felt here over the perceived lack of information is greater than stated. This feeling of disregard is a big part of the negative response, although I do believe from what has been said by this respondent that they are

wedded to their own change programme. They could not see a way of continuing with it. From the interview feedback I consider that added to that are the recent discussions about children's services and adult social care being the priority for the organisation even so far as they may be the only delivery left. I think this has added a real fear factor for this respondent, who perhaps feels that they should be fighting for the very existence of their department and ultimately their job. This would be a completely different position to the one they held on their arrival in the organisation.

*".... a really interesting point (referring to the lack of information) because what I constantly said to them was "you're taking me on this path but I don't work that way, I want to see where I'm going before I go on that path so that then I can actually challenge it" but what they did was they presented information every week and every week I would say "well can you tell me what's happening next week?" "No". "Can you send me the information beforehand?" "No". "So you're not going to send me information so I can't read it so I have to react in a one hour or two hour meeting?"*

*It really disengaged me, I work in a very different way, I work in a very ordered manner, not controlled but ordered and I order my time and I order my presence and everything I do is very well considered.” (B4 pp. 5-6).*

What this respondent is saying here is that due to lack of information being shared with them in a timely manner they felt 'bounced' in to responding. This led them to not being taken along with the change process from the very beginning. I actually find this hard to understand. Here is a senior leader who acts confidently and has voiced confidence in the success of change already achieved. There was nothing in the way of them raising concerns later on to points that had been discussed. Furthermore, as a senior leader in a large organisation I would have expected the skill of responding directly within a two hour meeting to be inherent in the role. Perhaps they felt that they needed to have physical time to be able to draw up a coherent argument against and that this was not available due to others responding in a different way to the same processes. The respondent went on to say that they felt manipulated within the process as well as discounted.

*“There was frustration and my frustration showed through all those workshops and the Chief Exec was frustrated because I was seen as not to*

*go along with that and the culture. There was a real cultural clash there. It wasn't understood."* (B4 p. 6).

Their resistance to the change programme was noted, but does not appear to have been addressed successfully. I found it interesting that the cultural clash appeared to be a personal one – 'I wasn't understood' – and not organisational. It was these personal differences that appear to have caused them the most angst.

*"In hindsight maybe you had to push that hard, maybe it had to be done but the key elements of that change programme were reform in terms of management de-layering; were reform in relations to the procurement;; were reform in relation to the back office; were reform in relation to the strategy. Now any change programme along the lines of any budget reduction would look at those four areas."* (B4 pp. 6-7).

From this statement I am assuming that the respondent ultimately agreed with the final approach to reform which the Changing Our Council programme worked on. Yet I am surprised because if you look at the structure within their department they have not achieved the management ratio's referred to in the reform programme, nor have they engaged fully with the centralisation of what is termed 'back office'. They were against the reductions in admin support; retained commissioning

aspects within one section of their department and retained other areas of strategy and policy, as well as supporting one of their own managers to challenge the hub and spoke model being developed for strategic support and policy development. This is hardly a resounding vote of confidence in the change programme.

*"The areas it didn't manage to tackle were the biggest issues of cultural change you know, where our leadership was in terms of the leadership of place, where our leadership was in terms of sustainability all what was called the enablers, the things that actually brought it close to the localised place, a place that was right." (B4 p.7).*

Again I am surprised about this comment. The enabler of 'place' was clearly allocated to this respondent to lead the change process (D57). It has not happened as yet. Furthermore, when aspects were discussed at the senior management team and culture change was raised as an issue that would need to be addressed, this respondent did not support that view (D8).

Further insight can be gained by further discussions on the economy.

*"Business growth is not going to occur at the same rate in terms of jobs in a recession and investment isn't going into it." (B4 p.7).*

The respondent here is referring to the Keynesian model which is the one they believe in. Within this model economic growth is enabled through increasing government intervention, increased spending and reduced interest rates. The respondent here does not believe that the government is doing that... With national government also not responding in the way this senior leader feels that they should appears to have 'frozen' them. They do not believe in the need to make the severe budget reductions they are being asked to undertake. It becomes easier then, to resist this change as well.

*"In the context of change we've changed as an organisation for the better to deliver better, more efficient services I'm delighted we've done that, I think that's good, I think that's healthy." (B4 p.7).*

Here they start to look forward again, acknowledging that the change process has worked, although this appears to be despite early distrust of the process.

*"In hindsight I would rather the start of the process of change was done in a more open and transparent way with more maturity and less doggedness I think that would have been, it would have embedded more quickly and been more hands to the pump." (B4 p.7).*



Here they felt that the process was not transparent and the change has not embedded. Nor did everyone commit to it. However, from others' comments, it would appear that this interviewee was the one who did not engage in it. Yet as a senior leader in the organisation I would have expected them to have been able to make sure that these things happened. The doggedness I think is in relation to the approach taken by the [REDACTED] within senior meetings where they asked individuals directly if they agreed and supported the decisions being taken at that meeting as discussed in interview with C7, C8 and C9.

*"I would have also liked us to have left the departments where they are now actually not creating delivery in different ways. I would like that to happen because they know their business. They know their business much better and they understand it." (B4 pp. 7-8)*

One of the enablers of Changing Our Council was 'delivery' of services but nothing was done with this and it was left to departments, so it appears to be a blockage of their own making.

*"Actually it is so difficult when you have such a personal position, that actually I don't know if we can ever get that right – and it was well*

*communicated, the first phase – but there's always going to be problems and I don't know if anybody actually on the corporate management team had ever gone through that level of change before, I don't think anybody had."* (B4 p.8).

I think a valid point is made here in that there was an unprecedented amount of savings to be made, but others had been involved in setting up departments and organisations, but it is more difficult to change and retain rather than start from scratch. The role of leadership also becomes more complex where there is an acknowledged lack of experience in dealing with the levels of reductions which have been addressed here. This respondent also refers to 'change burn out' in respect of leaders within the system. This acknowledges the challenge that has been and continues to be faced.

*"We've worked through it with a great level of leadership and resolve but people are actually tired, people are really tired – but you know there hasn't been a respite in relation to all this over the last three years, preparing people for that level of emotional energy just isn't possible."* (B4 p.10).

Yet that leadership in terms of solutions apart from taking money from the system is not evident in what they are describing. I believe that they were not prepared for the emotional drain on themselves, let alone able to prepare others for it.

*"The other key thing I think is the fact that I need to be sure – or the staff need to be sure – that when change occurs that change occurs with equity and organisational change without equity means a lot different." (B4 p. 10).*

I fear that this is something they are really worried about, but the reference to equity is not about equal opportunities type of equity but is in relation to having the savings distributed equally across all departments. There is a fear here that other areas are protected because of priorities, particularly safeguarding, which relates to children's as well as adult's services.

*"There will be a feeling that needs to be understood for delivery to continue and it's also important for people to feel and understand the level of that delivery." (B4 p.10).*

Here there is a whole fear of change linked to their sense of well-being and not being in control to stop the decimation of services that they are responsible for.

*"... the maturity to understand the benefits of that ...." (B4 p. 10).*

Taking all of the recent comments into consideration, I feel that the respondent is referring to the difficulties, personal ones, of seeing all that they have joined the organisation to achieve and to prove, drifting away from them and they can do nothing to stop that.. The frustration, indeed the depression of that makes it even more difficult to engage with the change process.

*"There is no benchmark on how well the council is doing, but nobody knows that so people doubt it and they are wanting to review ..... we have no way of measuring if change is a very good thing. You can measure the money and you can measure the people, you can measure the pounds shillings and pence – an activity for the outcome is the matter of another issue and that's harder to tell." (B4 p.10).*

In fact the respondent has listed several outcome measurements even though they profess that there is no way to measure it. What they appear to be focusing on is the activity of change and how to measure that. Perhaps requesting feedback from others could be an option.

*"On the leadership of change – what I have tried to do is get everybody to lead on that change and nobody to chicken out on anything, to face up and to be really strong and supportive of positive change." (B4 p. 11).*

I believe that this involvement of staff to engage with the process is very important and is confirmed by others within the research. However, I fear that would have been very challenging for this respondent. It is very difficult to champion a cause that you are not convinced is the right one.

I am aware that I have invested a great deal of time and analysis in this one respondent. However, I felt that it was important to explore this area in more depth. There is no doubt in my mind that there have been difficulties for them to engage with the corporate change process in a positive way. I feel for them. It cannot be easy: to join an organisation to undertake a planned programme of change based on your own personal model; to see that change as very positive and working well, and then to feel that this is being taken away from you ;to find yourself in a position of being pushed or manipulated into a different change programme that you do not believe in; and worse still to believe that the reason for

those changes, large reductions in resources, is equally against your fundamental beliefs of economic development. That must be very hard.

However, there have been barriers to change which have not been addressed within the senior leadership team. Difficulties within that team have already been alluded to. Ultimately there is a corporate job to do and the members of the wider organisation expect the senior leadership to achieve this.

Others feel that there are difficulties with change, but that these are caused by poor national leadership. This speaks to the amount of change, its complexity and its speed.

*"There isn't one person in this organisation that isn't affected by change and that just feels like very poor national leadership – you need to keep something stable when you're changing everything and the most stable part of the [redacted] is the provider [redacted] but they're the market." (B5 p.36).*

This respondent feels that too much change can leave people feeling rootless.

Keeping stability becomes problematic. There is a strong belief in retaining some

stability in the system. This should come from within the organisation, but at the moment they feel that the only stability is in the market place for providers.

Another respondent considers that those leading change need to consider staff and how they are responding to change. They speak within the context of leading complex change where you can be dealing with systems as well as cultural change. They feel that they need different responses and ways of working to implement them.

*"They might both go together but behavioural issues need tackling in different ways and if you have a behavioural problem you use a whole series of different techniques to achieve such a change, ranging from simply making people aware all the way through to, you know, potentially having sanctions or penalties if they don't and all points in between." (B7 p. 5).*

Others look at the financial management and how the allocation of resources supports change or not.

*"I think probably one of the challenges for leadership we still have [REDACTED], is that we still seem to be trapped in allocation of resources internally in a very I think traditional way of 'There's your cash limit and tell us what you can do with it'." (B8 p. 8)*

This was a method of dealing with resource allocation for the financial year 2012/13. The purpose of this was to identify savings before budgets were allocated, so that the risk of overspending was removed. What I find hard to understand here is that this respondent also feels that 'this needs to be discussed some more within the leadership team'. We are discussing the leadership of change. This senior leader has identified a problem but has not really touched on the leadership of this, except to pass it back to the team for discussion. They appear to be struggling with a difficult leadership area. But there are also time pressures for savings to be made. To spend time on continued reflection and re-visiting decisions already taken seems to be a luxury when decisions need to be taken.



They continue this debate by reflecting on decisions that need to be taken in respect of stopping the delivery of some services. This is a difficult decision to take.

*"So I think there's still a long way to go and I do think that's going to be quite a leadership of change challenge because we need to get people in the room agreeing that we might need to give up on a few areas and not be the Council that does that anymore." (B8 p. 9).*

However, there is no sense of urgency to this. It is recognised as a leadership challenge and the solution appears to be to talk about it and agree something. I get no sense of action from them or how they will help to make that happen. They are being reflective, but it feels tentative. I query if the challenge is too great.

They go on to discuss if available resources should be focused only on the top priority areas. The rest of the services they feel could be delivered by others. This leads them to consider the localism debate.

*"So that localism debate, the who-can-deliver-what-elsewhere-in-the-authority-to-help-this-agenda I think we still need to do quite a lot of unpicking and discussion from a strategic policy point of view." (B8 p. 9).*

The Localism Act (HM Government, 2012) has been discussed earlier, but I am not convinced that supporting local voluntary organisations to deliver local authority services will gain extensive savings. There is an expectation that the Community Right to Challenge arising from the Act will enable the voluntary sector or groups of staff to set up organisations which will negotiate with the local authority to take on these services. The budgets being used to run them will continue to be used to run them. It is expected that this will be more efficient allowing efficiencies to be made as savings. However it has been identified through the analysis of recent government announcements for local authority spending that this organisation will need to find savings of about £115 million over the next three years. This is hardly something that can be achieved through efficiencies. What does come across here for me is that others in the organisation have talked about managing upwards with national government policy. I referred earlier to this whilst looking at how the local authority has to balance the national and local politics and reflect back on that section now.

*“So it's that ability to represent and challenge to get the best outcomes for your place, so it's not about just accepting government policy, it's about shaping the practical implementation in government policy, in a way that works for us and that's about managing upwards with government, and that*

*means in local government terms rather than just seeing ourselves as an agency of central government – it's about us being a tier of government in our own right and being self-confident enough to challenge and to position ourselves to be able to do that. That comes back to personal credibility and all of those skills but it's a hugely important part of leadership in terms of making a really good fist of it." (B1 p. 7).*

There are marked differences here between these two respondents. The earlier one is reflective but in a passive way – 'Let's go and discuss that' – whilst the one immediately above is more confident and likens that confidence to personal credibility. For them it is about shaping things for the future and re-positioning the organisation as a way of moving forward on the change agenda. One is passive and through that passivism can be equally as blocking of change as the leader who shows their frustrations and grapples with the difficulties at hand. The leader who is shaping and re-positioning the organisation is likely to get the job done. However, care needs to be taken that the team moves with them.

The theme of differences in understanding of what leadership is about and how it needs to operate is highlighted further as the interview progresses.

*"But that's not to in any way to say that I don't think a massive amount has been achieved in really aligning everything through, I mean you know I had a meeting with [REDACTED] about our Education Improvement Strategy and what's so interesting when I read this, [REDACTED], is all the alignment coming through which is so strong – the collaborative working with partners, the knowledge and understanding, the systematic issues around Academies and free schools and other delivery options that are hitting us left right and centre. But actually the willingness to look at a model for [REDACTED] very differently than possibly we have had traditionally." (B8 pp. 9-10).*

Here we have feelings that the organisation is moving towards alignment of its priorities. They are working together in collaboration with systemic changes regarding the changing structures of schools. They believe that this reflects what they have been discussing around developing a financial model, and indeed praise the leadership of this. However, there is a complete lack of understanding of the financial model being put into place by national government. As more and more schools convert to academy status, there is a greater threat to the organisation financially.

The leadership within the schools section of the organisation is addressing this through developing effective services which are able to sell themselves financially to schools. In other words schools buy in these services, where previously additional grant from government funding paid for these directly. The leadership of the education section of children's services is not focused on making the level of savings being required of the organisation. It is a complex leadership of priorities, vision, influence and relationships. Certainly it does address falling resources for the authority, but it looks at replacing resources which are being lost through the national agenda for schools. It does not address the extent of savings required across the organisation in this aspect. It addresses strategic commissioning and place-shaping to achieve shared goals. It does not offer financial solutions which involve the outsourcing of services to others through procurement routes as alluded to by this same senior leader. Furthermore, this expression of praise and acknowledgement of how children's services are being led is not reflected in the culture of the department that this particular leader is responsible for. They continue with their discussion on this theme.

*"I think we've got all that infrastructure there, we've got, it sounds like, very strong governance emerging and leadership doesn't it, to take this platform forward but it can't be underestimated we need the rest of the organisation behind this in its leadership – don't we? – as much as [REDACTED] [REDACTED] leading it from the forefront of you know, the leaders in achieving better outcomes for young people in the district." (B8 p. 10)*

This respondent cites children's services as an effective leadership model, a strong leadership role which should be modelled across the organisation. However, it is not taken forward by this particular senior leader into the corporate arena.

Indeed observation has been made of responses within their own area of responsibility, that when systems and activities from within children's services have been put forward as a model to develop across the council they have been 'given the hand'. This equates to a physical holding up of the hand by other senior leaders to stop the discussion and refute the proposal (ON20).

My final reflections within this particular concept theory relate to discussions on leading change where the change is brought about by national government through statutory guidance on safeguarding and protecting children from abuse.

The added complexity is that whilst changing practices and reviewing a whole system the services concerned are not immune to the need to reduce resources.

*"So I think during that change process you need different styles – not just, the open leadership, the being visible. I've briefed all the managers on the change, had them all in when things are difficult, explained the budget decisions we've made." (C1 p. 5).*

Here the respondent has been discussing the transactional nature of change leadership when dealing with reducing resources. They are clear that within this you need to use leadership styles where there is visible leadership, leading from the front. You also need to be open and to have good communication. This communication includes making sense of the reductions and why the decisions were made. It speaks to the need for leaders to be able to move between transactional and transformational leadership.

*"So I think probably on reducing resources a mixture of those two styles, the very personal supportive (but don't get sucked into) it along with some of the transactional. You have to see it through and have to follow process and have to do HR processes." (C1 p. 7).*

Here the respondent has expanded on their approach to leading change. They are clear that within reducing resources leadership needs to be transactional.

However, within that they have recognised the need to be personally supportive to staff who are going through a difficult process of downsizing. Indeed some staff will lose their jobs within the process. Alongside this they are aware that there are risks in being personable and that if this moves to the personal, a leader can be drawn in to the emotional aspects of change which would not be helpful to themselves or ultimately to the staff. For me, I think this is the difference between leading the concept and purpose of change to leading the implementation of that. Both skills are necessary for change to happen successfully.

They go on to discuss the changes required following the Munro review (HM Government, Department for Education, 2011). This they feel is more transformational and are clear about where the change programme needs to take them.

*"I think we should be starting to think about dealing with the ..... families in another way which is what Munro's saying, and actually doing proper engagement, doing change work with families and that requires different*



*leadership because people, when you read case files, and you look at the practice, people have become - I suppose covering their back - become risk averse, there's a lot of form filling, there's a lot of checking," (C1 p. 21).*

The leadership of change here constitutes a move to systems thinking, working across the whole system of social care to enable practitioners to really engage with families, moving away from the tick box processes and number crunching for performance management to real intervention in families in order to make a difference in people's lives.

*"All of that takes very careful leadership and management in terms of, you know, if I look at my senior [REDACTED] who's steeped in social work, who's very professional, proud of the profession, who gives that physical leadership, who is out at [REDACTED], nearly every day at the minute with the service managers establishing a new ethos of collaborative working, because we've put three very distinctive area offices together they've never worked together in that way before and actually we can't rely on three [REDACTED] to sort out an allocation system; they are having to go in there and take probably a bit of command and control, but actually take*

*control and say: we'll have an allocation panel and I will chair that panel as a*  
*[REDACTED] – they shouldn't have to do that, but that's what they're*  
*doing. So that visible leadership, being prepared to take action and actually*  
*get hold of a system that needs to be sorted.” (C1 p. 24).*

They talk here about visible leadership, where the leader is working closely with staff to model what is needed. They are implementing transformational leadership. Working at leadership will transform the way the services work not just within but across the system. The vision is clear and sets the direction for change. They have been assertive about getting there and have influenced the process forcefully in taking control of some areas, such as setting up an allocations panel and chairing that to make sure that it works as they envisage. This takes confidence and courage. It results in commitment to the change and an understanding of what that will mean in practice.

*“We have got a difficult group of people who have found it difficult to change over the years and have probably done a lot of it by some TLC, some time out building as a team, you know; kind of responding to them and supporting them but actually being very clear in terms of practice, what we*

*expect, performance. And we've actually driven the performance up incredibly over the last three years as you could see in the Ofsted report."*

(C1 p. 25).

The leadership of change here has recognised the potential of barriers to change and as such has deliberately deployed a range of leadership skills. This has been about visioning and clarity of direction. That has been supported by engaging and working with staff towards the ultimate change in the way they work. It has involved distributed leadership. The increase in performance and ultimately outcomes has evidenced the success.

The Munro Review (HM Government, Department for Education, 2011) required local authorities to make structural changes in staff. It related to developing a career structure for workers which did not restrict promotion into management roles only. This was felt to retain the most experienced and committed workers in face to face work, utilising the most effective staff in direct work with families.

*"In terms of Munro and the change of practice seniors, the practice improvement people, the senior practitioner grade - because you got rid of*

*senior practitioner grade years ago - and we got a level 3 when you're most experienced. And after the inspection we spoke about some investment and said should we have two, you know, senior practitioners perhaps, one at [REDACTED] one at [REDACTED] that would be there to drive forward the practice and learn and embed it and do some of the hand holding, going out with some of the newly qualified's." (C1 pp. 25-26).*

This on the face of it called out for more investment in resources to develop a structure which included some staff being paid more in order to retain them in the delivery of the services. This was a challenging task when at the same time you are looking to reduce resources and not require further investment financially in to services.

*"Actually when [REDACTED] and I thought this through we just thought that is just a drop in the ocean, we need to make it sustainable and lo and behold! - in true [REDACTED] style, we've been paying people for years and years and years to go on some diploma in child welfare and development and something, at a fairly high level at the University. So we've got a cohort of people who are advanced practitioners, who've done an advanced diploma in safeguarding*

*who we never ask anything about. We send them on, pay for them, so we're going to find out who they are, who the cohort are, and then try and make a proper learning organisation, much broader."* (C1 p. 26).

What this led to was a very creative response which also recognised and valued the personal development that staff had been undertaking in their role. They are now looking to transform the system in to a learning organisation which is rewarded through a pay structure which was already in place. It gave a purpose to learning and development for staff and valued that learning beyond just monetary return. And at the same time it met the requirements of national government policy change.

Furthermore, the leadership reflected their commitment to a learning organisation through the use of regional and national experts in the field. They drew on academia as well to offer a clear evidence base to staff for the change, whilst modelling what was expected of a 'learning organisation'.

*"Having [REDACTED] there, having an academic who's in the front door, I think has helped in terms of driving a different approach backed up by, you know, evidence based.... So we've got a lot of good things; we've got him,*

*we've got [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] who's doing a lot of work with us on older young people in care and what works for them. And who else have we got? We've got another academic, but there's about three, you know. We're just kind of, we just feel like we're lifting our game, you know, in terms of giving a kind of evidence based, kind of visible leadership. This is modelling how we want it, you know, it's got a completely different feel to it. Whereas before we'd have been much more remote, we'd have had [REDACTED] at [REDACTED], very remote from the areas, things just rolling on as normal, you know." (C1 p. 28).*

I believe that this goes beyond modelling and speaks of the humility of this senior leader. They have a confidence grown from their commitment and understanding of how the services work now and how they need to work in the future. As a leader they are confident and courageous, drawing skills and learning from a variety of people in a way which values the staff. This is confirmed in the following statement:

*"..... very visible, very hands on, steeped in the practice, being there, leading from the front, looking at the work and allocating, making sure things are fair*

*and equitable. Because that's always an issue – about what team's got what and who manages what and the throughput. So I just see a very, very different probably much more, just much more intuitive, much more hands on probably more –you know the Munro stuff – you can't do it from, you can't do it from a remote place.” (C1 p. 30).*

What they also demonstrate is that they looked at the expectations from Munro and then manipulated those to meet the needs of the organisation. They did this through creativity and transformational leadership, bringing staff and others along with them. In doing so they exceeded the requirements as laid down by the final report.

They conclude with reference to the challenges of change, the pressure and stress that this involves:

*“What we need is a period when we can develop our learning and improvement, but right now there is a great deal of pressure and stress. We have to look at our processes, but there is not time to deal with it all.” (C1 p. 33).*

A heartfelt cry for the time and space to reflect and deal with change; a respite from the turbulence that complex change can bring.

#### 4.14 On Confidence

Within the wider discourse of the research data several respondents made reference to the confidence required in relation to leading change.

*"... have leadership styles where you know, your concern, you know, it's about giving people confidence that you have personal confidence that this can happen," (B1 p. 3).*

This relates to confidence on several different levels. It reflects this respondent's view that leading change needs that leader to have personal confidence.

Confident that they can make a difference and make change happen, but alongside that transmitting it in such a way as to give other people confidence.

*"You have to be able to deliver, you have to make things happen and you build your credibility and confidence as you go along. You earn the respect*



*of your peers and of the people that you need to be able to influence and so you need to surround yourself with a whole team." (B1 pp. 7-8).*

That is a strong statement relating to success in delivery. That success then enables you to feel more confident and at the same time earns the respect and confidence of others. It is integral, they believe, to the effectiveness of influencing skills intrinsic to the leading of change. It cross-refers to general leadership skills as well as building your reputation as an effective leader.

*"[As a leader]... need to have the confidence to look beyond the budget crisis .... [and] confidence of politicians to do a three or five year plan....to implement the whole thing as one plan. " (B1 pp. 22-23).*

One of the outcomes of confidence as a leader is being able to undertake planning and visioning over a longer period. This confidence also supports developing confidence with others in doing the same.

*"...feeling confident when they're feeling very uncertain and telling them about these opportunities and enthusing them about those opportunities at*

*every opportunity. And that helps staff cope, it lifts the spirits, it keeps morale going even though they are going through very difficult times and that is particularly true when you're looking at the resource issue because we're having to downsize the organisation." (B2 p. 4).*

Confidence here is used within communication to take people with you on these journeys of change. It also supports people to deal with the fear of change. After all, if the leader of change is confident that it will all be all right then that confidence can be shared more widely. It also relates to the ability to recognise those opportunities when this can be reinforced, to be opportunistic in nature.

*"I do think that's a crucial policy: both a confidence in yourself and where you're going and where you're taking people, and a confidence in your staff and your partners that you work with. And instilling that confidence when they kind of get a bit anxious and they lose it a little bit.... It's actually that reassurance bit coming in. But you've got to show confidence in difficult times." (B2 p. 5).*

Having self-confidence and developing that in others gives reassurance to staff and others in the whole process. They expand further on this linking that

confidence to reputation which they believe has helped in giving some historical protection against cuts in children's services (B2 p. 14).

#### **4.15 On Focus and Determination**

I decided to include this construct theory as a clear area of leadership of change.

The analysis was evidencing confident and courageous leadership within the senior leadership team. The complex change I was investigating required focus and determination to develop and implement change across and beyond a very large organisation. At the beginning of the analysis this sort of seeped out. It was hinted at here and there in the discourse, becoming more evident as the analysis deepened.

*"...keeping focussed on why we're here; it's about not getting distracted by some of these things." (B2 p. 2)*

This refers to the 'mantra' development for communicating the vision, priorities and goals of the organisation. These were repeated consistently and constantly

across all communications. It also supported the relationship building and working together with staff and partners.

*"[It is] very easy to get distracted by governance and we have to be very careful that we don't lose sight of what it's all about." (B2 p. 2).*

Here they talk about the strength of focus, knowing what is of ultimate importance – improved outcomes for children, young people and families.

*"... and part of good leadership is keeping people focussed on the vision and the values and the principles of that." (B2 p. 3).*

This is not just about the focus and determination of a good leader. It also speaks to the need to support others to develop and retain that same focus and determination.

The final example I am using in this construct is the acknowledgement from one respondent that this focus and determination was also present across a wider leadership in the implementation of change.

*"In my whole life I'll look back on this and people's personal resolve and I will remember it with immense pride actually of what people stood up and did in the face of tremendous adversity, Nobody had ever stopped doing what they should do, no-one had ever kicked back and said 'No, I'm not doing that'. In all my time here and I don't know anybody in this department, any manager that has feedback we've had upset people, we've had people who have been displaced, we've had upset representatives, industrial relations all that." (B4 pp. 9-10).*

I believe that the examples of discourse that I have used, alongside reflective analysis of behaviour, body language and tone of voice within the interviews has evidenced the importance of focus and determination as a construct theory. Furthermore the modelling of this by senior leaders has supported staff to respond in the same way when implementing that change.

#### **4.16 On Accountability**

Some respondents made reference to accountability. This ranged from direct statements to longer discourse.

*"We're accountable too." (B2 p. 15).*

This was stated in the context of accountability to a range of partners and stakeholders, but ultimately feeling that they are accountable for making sure that the organisation achieves its vision and goals for children, young people and families. This speaks to taking responsibility and that leads us back to shared and distributed leadership.

Further discourse takes this a step further.

*"[It's] about our relationship with our direct management within the structures and ensuring that we are accountable for the actions that we're taking, and that we have methods and means of monitoring and showing the outcomes from those actions that you're taking." (B3 p. 10).*

This, I believe, relates to accountability not only of self but for others. It brings in the teams that deliver the services. Again I see this as relating to distributed leadership within the management structure.

A further respondent sees accountability as more rhetorical. This was within a discussion about outcomes, how they are measured and what people are called to account on with regard to performance generally.

*"I think that's the rhetoric but I don't think ... I think where we are now that's not the case so things like we've had the [REDACTED] help fund – help out the Children's Trust performance last week – and it's that what you say is a way forward but you've taken out the [REDACTED] performance regime so actually who is going to hold us to account? Because that is not clear." (B5 pp. 26-27).*

This comment relates to a discussion on performance, accountability for that and how it is measured. The respondent feels that the performance measures in place for delivery are too short term, being measured over weeks. Assessment of impact over a longer period would show if the intervention of service delivery changes behaviour for the longer term. They feel that this is what they should be accountable for and not the short-termism of current measurements.

#### **4.17 On Systems thinking**

This section explores the move to looking at and leading across and within a system as opposed to focusing more narrowly on individual process. This means

looking at the whole and its inter-relationships, rather than how some parts are working. It recognises that whilst dealing with change and particularly complex change there is a need to keep the whole picture in focus.

*"It's interesting, all the serious case reviews that have led to some very serious local system problems." (A2 p. 2).*

Here early comments about systems and systems thinking in relation to serious case reviews poses that the serious case reviews themselves have caused systems problems -whereas it is the review which highlights the issues and problems present in the system of child protection and working together.

They go on to assert that:

*"[What] we've now got is a system that only holds itself together because it chooses to." (A2 p. 5)*

They obviously feel that this is a very difficult arena for the organisation to operate within.



This statement ignores the fact that the Children Act (HM Government, 2004) requires organisations to work together to ensure safeguarding and child protection duties are achieved. The rhetoric of this is that of new guidelines arising from Munro (HM Government 2011) requiring Safeguarding Boards to publish serious case reviews. The reason given for this is to share the learning more widely and beyond the local area in question. However, there is a reputational risk for the publishing authority where failures across a system are open to scrutiny beyond the partnership arrangements.

*“What we’ve got going on here I think in a sense is a different model of leadership that’s more collaborative, more co-operative that has a system leadership rather than a group of people saying here are your priorities just you lot get on with it.” (A2 p. 6).*

With further reflection, having grumbled about systems thinking, they show an acceptance of it and indeed start to promote it as a way of working which encourages a leadership dependent on collaboration, relationships and influencing skills. They feel it gives greater potential to dealing with the challenges of complex change which are around for the organisation and their partners at the moment.

*"In a sense it's got the potential to be more powerful and opens doors to what maybe a more energising future. Because we've got to look at how we continue to improve things in the light of what's going to be another good long period of austerity, cuts and difficulties and challenges with a growing population, a diverse population and an economy that requires massively improved outcomes." (A2 p. 7)*

They feel that it enables a focus on outcomes whilst recognising the challenges and opportunities that the change programme has brought to shared leadership across the system. They view this as different to the distributed leadership of the previous relationship with schools where there was autonomy developing but with accountability being to the local authority and through that to the local community.

There remains though some uncertainty for this respondent. They are supportive of systems thinking as a leadership model.

*"I was quite impressed by the idea of dealing with Academies but I wanted that to be a system owned, and then responded to. So it could come from the consensus of support for making something happen." (A2 pp. 8-9).*

Here they feel comfortable with the role they have worked out, utilising collaboration with influencing skills. However, they feel that continued change and policy shifts from government put this at risk.

*"I think it's an element of deliberately changing the system for the sake of changing the system." (A2 p. 9).*

This statement is made in reference to the development of studio schools for 14 to 19 year olds, which have just been introduced as part of the free school movement nationally. It has a focus on increased vocational education (up to 40% of curriculum content) as well as the demise of careers education and guidance. This constant policy shift from national government engenders feelings of lack of control and trying to lead across a system that is not constant.

However, they do retain a confidence in the development of systems thinking across the schools. They view this as being successful and worthwhile regardless of future policy shifts that have to be dealt with.

*"I've never known a greater degree of engagement between the different parties and stakeholders in the system as they all look together at what's*

*coming and I think the realisation is really where we're together, we've got to start working together in our own common mutual interests. And that will lead towards our becoming more and more part of it so that the system itself has to weld itself together so you get a model of division that we integrated."*

(A2 p. 10).

They feel that it has been successful. The new relationship and shared leadership role for the local authority and its family of schools has enabled the systems thinking approach to cement that relationship. This cross-refers to leadership in general as well as leadership of change. The impact of the systems focus has changed the way the leadership works and how they lead within the system through their relationships and confidence in that system.

Furthermore, they do feel that a distinctive role remains with the local authority that of holding the system, together with its component parts, to account.

*"I think it needs to be held to account, supported, nurtured, and if need be checked at times, there needs to be some strategic oversight and review, some power of intervention."* (A2 p. 11).

And of course this is the case. Her Majesty's Inspectorate has made this quite clear (D64).

Others applaud the use of systems thinking in leadership.

*"...building a flexible system and an agile system that copes with this fragmentation, that maintains a collective approach including all of the players to driving school improvement." (B1 p. 10).*

Their comments are in the context of discussing the partnership arrangements which have been put into place between the local authority and schools, irrespective of and inclusive with academies and free schools. They reinforce this.

*"It shows that a lot of the leadership that I'm talking about is actually in place in Children's Services to take this forward." (B1 p. 10).*

Linking systems thinking to systemic change they feel that *"we're well placed now to continue to make real progress"* (B1 p. 10) within the complexities of dealing with a growing population, the need for more school places and in the context of low achievement overall.

*"Systemic change" they go on to say "is when you're looking across the whole system and trying to change key parts of the system in a way that leads to improvement across the whole system without damaging other key parts of it." (B1 p. 12).*

There are strong feelings here regarding systemic or whole-systems change. They are discussing the rhetoric of the current government policy shifting which they believe leads to a fragmentation of the system. Furthermore, they believe that systems thinking in relation to current leadership in the local authority has enabled the organisation to move beyond this for the good of the community.

They go on to assert:

*"Taking resources from one part of the system to another part of the system as a clear political re-prioritisation of resources, means it's not a systemic approach and actually you can only go so far with governance and structures and it's about leadership and the skills, it's about the curricular, it's about what education, it's about the philosophy and underpinning education*

*and what and how we're teaching young people and the other influences on education outcomes and how we're addressing those." (B1 pp.12-13).*

They affirm this view again.

*"They couldn't even define what the system is let alone work on the system as a whole." (B1 p.14).*

This gives a clear view of frustration with national government policies on education and schools. They clearly feel that these policies are fragmentary and as they change other parts cause even more fragmentation. They clearly believe that the systems thinking approach adopted locally is much more effective. It is creative and does support the balancing of national policies and legislation with local responses to needs referred to earlier.

They then go on to explore the need to know the systems so that a leader can identify where a change would have the most positive impact. A leader has to be mindful to the influences surrounding the system as well the differing views of it.

*"Holistically addressing the issues and creating ignitions for improvement in key parts of the system and looking at all of the influences and all of the different views of the world." (B1 p. 15)*

They refer to this as the 'voltaic charm' of systems thinking.

The change programme is seen as successful.

*"We've addressed change pretty well in very difficult circumstances and in a very short timescale so far." (B1 p.15).*

They are pleased with what has been achieved in a short time scale, recognising the complexity inherent in the change programme. This is directly in relation to the centralisation of back office systems which enabled savings which in turn protected front line service delivery. They view this as being achieved through the systems thinking approach to delivering change.

*"[This resulted in] different approaches to how we've given non service specific resources being made corporate, simplified, standardised and*



*resourcing our priorities rather than just resourcing where budgets have historically been held.” (B1 p.16).*

I am not fully convinced of the truth of this statement. Certainly resources have been moved from historical positions within departments, but not all of these have moved, some have been retained (B4). Resources' being made 'corporate' needs some further exploring in terminology. 'Corporate' is not a different place; 'being held centrally' describes its position more clearly. Although the rhetoric is about meeting our priorities, there remains some confusion where it is insisted that prioritisation of the use of these resources must be taken back to the senior leadership team for agreement. Yet, the organisation on another level appears to be very confident about its priorities.

I fail to understand why the priorities have to be revisited with regard to back office resource allocation. Furthermore, this was a difficult and complex change process. It was further complicated by those involved in developing the model ready for implementation and indeed the model was changed part way through its implementation. Respondents feel in general terms that this centralised resource is still not working effectively for the organisation (B8, C3, C5, C7, C8 and C9).

On discussing systems thinking and knowing your systems, a different respondent considered the review of systems for improvements and savings.

*"It really should be part of the day job of businesses really– shouldn't it? – to constantly look at how you do things and do them in the most efficient way and we've used LEAN methodology and staff have been trained in it and we've made some significant improvements so it's not as if it's something that we haven't done before and I think, you know, I do think it is important corporately as an organisation that we are expected to be challenged." (B3 p. 19).*

What this respondent feels is that the review and improvement of systems should also be undertaken using the systems thinking model. It should not be seen as additional work but as part of normal business delivery. However, they are already using a system referred to as 'LEAN' which is different to what has been adopted by the Changing Our Council programme. There is concern here that the business process review that has been adopted (referred to as '6Sigma'), as it is separated from the services, may over-complicate service reviews. Staff from within the

centralised back office teams have been trained to deliver it, and as yet it is untested.

As a final reflection, this respondent voiced the desire to re-visit a previous development which was stopped by the new coalition government.

*"From a leadership point of view it's looking back at some of the total place work. That might be worth having a look at in terms of what that's saying regarding a whole-system leadership because I do think it did have some important messages around systems and understanding how systems can help or hinder and how we understand and how we even identify what the barriers are and then what we do about them." (B3 p. 34).*

This is the concept of working across organisations and potential partners to assess how budgets can be brought together in order to make savings elsewhere.

For example, if an organisation develops successful interventions which keep people out of prison, then the prison service will require fewer resources.

Therefore, those savings can be re-directed to deliver more of those interventions.

It's an easily understood concept, but in reality it needs front-end funding to develop

the interventions before any savings can be made for re-investment. The current economic climate does not foster this approach of increased investment.

#### **4.18 On Leading Change – Organisational Development**

This construct theory explores the concept of leading change through organisational development, aspects of which I reviewed within chapter two of this thesis.

Several respondents explored and touched upon organisational development within their discussions.

*“What we want is a completely different type of organisation and actually that comes from how we develop our people.” (B1 p. 20).*

This initial comment brought into the construct, focuses on staff development and how to make the organisation an 'employer of choice'. The concept appears very laudable but what has not happened as yet is how that will be defined. It appears to be a vision for the respondent, but not one that has been clearly articulated.

They go on to assert the need for:

*"A total step change in our approach to people management and development across the organisation." (B1 p. 20).*

This I believe speaks to organisational development with cultural change.

There then followed a series of statements which can be viewed as aspects to be developed which would offer an overall approach to achieving the 'employer of choice' badge. Aspects such as 'attract the right talent'; 'retain the right talent'; and "empower frontline staff to make decisions without having to refer everything up to senior officer level, before they are prepared to jump." (B1 p. 20).

They refer to this as "*changing the philosophy of the whole organisation.*" What I remain unclear about is whether they are looking to meet the changing role of the local authority or whether changing the philosophy will effect this change. Perhaps it is a bit of both.

They also referred to the organisation as having been historically 'an old, white boys club' and that now there was a balancing out with women in senior leadership positions. A further step still to be achieved was to look at how the organisation

can reflect the community make-up of the district. This would involve increasing the representation of ethnic minorities at a senior level.

They conclude their reflections with the statement:

*"We don't have people capable of developing the strategies to sort that out."*

(B1 p. 22).

There is an honesty here that recognises the difficulties of developing this policy in an effective way and the lack of resources currently available to develop that. I have recently learnt that there are proposals to deliver the Human Resource function differently through partial out-sourcing in order to develop this capacity (D45).

Other respondents view organisational development slightly differently within the change process.

*"It's that form and function. It's very straight forward for me. It's about what are the needs, and then how do we deliver it and then after that comes and how do we organise ourselves to do it, rather than the other way around and*

*I do think sometimes, you're right, people retreat into structures because it's safe don't they?" (B2 p. 8).*

This is about looking at the functions you need to fulfil before applying a structure to it. The definition of role and function enables a change leader to then consider how those roles should be structured within an organisation. It refers to the perception voiced by some that the local authority is constantly re-structuring as a method of making savings. This isn't necessarily what has been happening. However, each round of savings has resulted in a structural re-organisation in order to take posts out. It ends up feeling like a piecemeal approach, with changes being made year on year. The majority of spending in the local authority is on staffing. Therefore removing staffing is the main way of making savings. On the other hand focusing on perpetual re-organisation of structures does become safe in a way. The difficult decisions of not delivering some services or doing things completely differently can be avoided. It becomes bizarrely the 'safe option'. The senior leader here obviously does not agree with that as an approach.

This is further supported by the following discussions.

*"And they focus on the process and they say "Oh we've got to reorganise and restructure" which is just daft really and just completely freezes organisations so I think the Children's Trust has tried really hard to rise above some of that stuff in that like most authorities it reviewed its functionality and it's interesting because a lot of people think that the statutory requirement to have a Children's Trust has disappeared, it hasn't, it's still there." (B2 pp. 8-9).*

In terms of developing the organisation one interviewee felt that:

*"From a corporate point of view part of the responsibilities and roles of leadership is to make sure that there is proper opportunity to debate and discuss those key issues, those key responsibilities that we fulfil within the council making sure we have those debates." (B3 p. 8).*

Furthermore:

*"Equipping your managers with the appropriate levels of skill, with the appropriate understanding and that again comes back to the leadership about making sure they are clear what their job is and there are mechanisms through the management systems and processes to ensure*



*that appraisal, one-to-one communication, meeting with staff, listening, hearing what's going on, not just relying on outputs and reports but actually going beyond that, challenging, asking the difficult questions, those sort of things that you have to do as part of your responsibility [are being put into practice]and making sure I suppose, that you've got the right training and development and support in place for your staff." (B3 p. 11).*

This looks at organisational change from the point-of-view of the development of staff within it, to strengthen communication and keeping the organisation on the right track. This speaks to me of organisational development by making sure you have the right people in the right place. Good staff development programmes to support the organisation to develop and grow, and will make sure that the vision, goals and priorities are fully understood, with everyone working in the same direction. However, they also found this very challenging and talked about the size of the organisation.

*"[Organisational development] –very challenging! You go down to ... you know, when you've got large numbers of frontline staff for example ..... are equipped [they] in the way that you want them to be." (B3 p. 11).*

Here they are articulating a concern about the challenge of not just communicating with staff at all levels, but also about retaining a consistency of message. This is very challenging when you have a large department with a mix of full and part time staff. There is generally a reliance on different managers at different levels communicating with their staff teams. There is a risk here that this turns into 'Chinese whispers' and that ultimately the message is so changed by the time it gets through the organisation that it bears no relation to the original intentions of the communication.

*"How do we equip staff? How do we respond to those challenges around; 'Well what are we going to do differently?' or 'What are we going to stop doing?' Because at the moment people feel really that nothing has changed and nothing has stopped." (B3 pp. 17-18).*

What they are feeling in the 'here and now' of the interview was a frustration and perhaps even a slight depression about the size of the task still to be achieved. They drew a deep breath, and then went on.

*"I think probably if we actually sat back and thought about it that probably isn't quite true. But I think that's how a lot of more frontline staff feel - and which is probably more of experience actually because you know the delivery of services carries on - doesn't it? But they've got less admin staff and they've got less various things, various resources have reduced and yet they're still obviously having to deliver." (B3 p. 18).*

What they are expressing is the feelings and feedback from frontline staff. These staff are negative about some aspects of the change as they see themselves operating the same level of services with clearly reduced resources.

A further respondent reflecting on early change models had looked at function and role. Clarity of vision and expectation was what they felt developed the organisation in a way which released energy and ambition into the organisation.

*"People were actually really clear about what they could do, they were unleashed, and you know they were absolutely autonomous, they kind of knew where they had to go but they really felt they had ownership." (B4 p. 4).*

They felt that role clarity gave their staff freedom and responsibility to deliver. It was this freedom with responsibility that created ownership of the change as well as increasing individual and collective ambition to succeed.

#### 4.19 On Risk and Difficulties

I felt that no leadership of change could be fully explored without the consideration of the risks and difficulties within that. Hence this construct theory is an integral aspect of leading change.

*"Those pupils who are going to need that specialist support are always perhaps at the bottom of the pile as far as the school's concerned because they concentrate on those that make them look good to people." (A1 p. 5).*

The local authority has a focus on the most vulnerable children, young people and families within the district. A concern here is around the risk of schools not sharing that focus as they (the schools) are measured by their academic results. This may reduce the level of investment they are willing to make with vulnerable pupils. Furthermore, this could lead to those vulnerable young people becoming even more at risk of non-achievement.

They were also aware of the risks inherent in continuing budget reductions.

*"We are going to struggle to provide a comprehensive service." (A1 p. 5).*

The overriding risk and difficulty for them was whether they would reach a point in the programme of reductions where difficult decisions would need to be taken about not delivering services. This would reduce their ability to achieve their ambitions for the district, which is politically a high-on intolerable position.

This was confirmed by their further statement:

*"There is a real danger that the system will fall apart, especially given the size and scale of the cuts that have hit and are still coming." (A1 p. 6).*

There were real fears and concerns here. This respondent did believe that if the cuts continued at the same rate the system of local authorities would cease to exist.

They also referred to difficulties in the pace of change and how they could support parents in particular to understand the new arrangements for schools.

*"I don't think that parents have got their heads round the fact that Academy status, free schools and everyone else is a threat to fracture that integration."*

(A1 p. 6).

Although this was not identified directly as a risk, it was highlighted as a difficulty.

They viewed their role as being integral to making sense of national changes for community members and how difficult this was. There was an increased difficulty for them as they had to make sense of and explain to others how they all fitted together within the concept of schools when it was a policy they clearly did not agree with.

I have included the following, not because they directly spoke to risk and difficulties, but because they were so passionate about this being able to happen as a result of the changed way of working, to me the risk arises if they cannot achieve it.

*"So spotting those things coming, having that acuity and being very, very proactive, being able to realign, having the agility to move things around, flex the resources, creating systems that aren't bureaucratic and top down and hierarchical and silo'd and fixed but are [so] agile and flexible and intelligent and smart that you can move resources, you can shift emphasis, you can*

*nuance what you're doing to maintain that focus on where you need to get to but taking account of what's happening in a very turbulent environment."*

(B1 p. 4).

This is the only respondent who spoke of agile and flexible, intelligent and smart as an ambition for the organisation. I retain a fear that without support across the organisation this will not be achievable. Hence I am including it in this construct.

They also reflected on this having to take place as changes are introduced and that threats and opportunities would need to be under continuous review. With further reflection they also felt that there "*was a need to undertake re-adjustment of the organisation*" (B1 p. 5). I interpreted this as making sure that smaller changes and adjustments needed to be made during the process of change rather than 'U-turns' in policy and direction. I consider this constant adjusting to be a risk. Other respondents (B2) had talked about keeping the focus on the long term vision and not getting mired in the detail. However, constant readjustments can lead people into being lost in the detail to make sure that adjustments were made to deal with threats and opportunities.

One respondent was also clear that there was risk and difficulty in the fact that the local authority is a politically contested organisation and that this could lead to blocking change. Politicians may become risk averse if they feel that the changes have *"negative reputational issues attached to them"* (B1 p. 24).

On an identified corporate risk for the authority, one respondent was very clear that although it was a huge risk, particularly when the organisation is reducing resources, this could be dealt with differently to how it has been dealt with by others. This of course is the risk of a child death. It relates to a child death by neglect or brutal action.

*"Some leaders will just get very angry and look to blame somebody because they'll be angry about the authority's name being dragged down and somebody usually the DCS will take the rap for it, end of. More compassionate leaders will take on board that it's a failing – that we've failed as a local authority and we've failed that child and we've failed that family. I would like to think that would be the response to a serious safeguarding issue or failure of."* (B2 p 13).



The risk of not delivering effective child protection services is a constant threat to children's services. It is a major risk and would lead to government intervention.

This in turn would require a very large investment by the local authority to address this action and would cause a complete collapse of any planned savings programme.

Others saw risks and difficulties by not engaging fully in the change programme.

They were concerned that a defensive position would be taken.

*"If we just contract into our own organisations and our own departments and hold on to reducing budgets – for example – that we've got then we're not going to do the best thing for the citizens." (B3 p. 6).*

They see this as a concern and a potential difficulty. They recognised that leaders did not have the choice of doing nothing, and yet fear of change may result in retreating into the safety of their own department. Not engaging corporately with the need for change would not achieve what could be perceived as the best for the citizens of the area.

A further difficulty identified was that of ownership of the change programme.

*"[The change programme] kept being referred to for a long time as the KPMG model and I think that probably tells you something actually." (B3 p. 14).*

The KPMG model referred to above was the foundation of the Changing Our Council programme. The consultants facilitated a series of workshops with the senior leadership team to develop the model. The resultant business cases (D49 to D56) were developed by the local authority's change team and agreed by the Corporate Management Team. However, some leaders did refer to issues around the purpose of the change model being different from the original concept; it became a savings change programme (C9). Furthermore the programme business case was clear that the model was predicated on achieving savings across the council (D49).

*"I think a point then had to be made – well actually it isn't, it's ours – but I think that would then lead me to ask the question 'Well, did it feel that it was owned by those people who initially made those decisions?' Because if that was the case then you know they probably wouldn't have felt the need*

*to refer to it as the KPMG or Price Waterhouse Cooper model or whatever."*

(B3 p. 14).

The difficulties arising from the change programme not being owned across the leadership I believe is reflected in the difficulties that occurred in its implementation.

The savings were slow to be realised and indeed in some cases were not realised fully (D57).

They went on to comment:

*"And I think it is absolutely important that the senior leaders of any organisation own those crucial, critical decisions and have worked through the options and plans and possibilities, agreed the final decisions between them in a way that they felt that they were fully contributing to the debate, input into the thinking and then come to a final decision which they can then all stand behind and own and implement and with confidence as their teams and their departments have to implement those." (B3 p. 15).*

They continue with this debate on the difficulty of change, and in the first analysis appear to back-tracking on that position.

Having recognised this, they feel, I think, that they may have exaggerated the situation. However they are obviously concerned about the difficulties as they continue to consider those issues.

*"How do we make it work, and what do we do if it doesn't work? And how do we know when it's not working and how do we know enough in advance if it's not working to actually do something about it so that something catastrophic doesn't happen? And I'm not saying something catastrophic is going to happen but there has been quite a lot of risk associated with this, we've actually had to move into a new model, a new operating model that we haven't really had any experience of. Which comes with risks doesn't it?"*

(B3 pp. 16-17).

I find this very interesting. They recognise it as a risk, but I think it is beyond fear of change. I think that this is a confidence issue – not so much in relation to their leadership of change, but in relation to their knowledge and experience of the

model being developed and implemented. The risk they perceive is about how they would know that it isn't working because they haven't got a clear view of what the finished product will achieve.

They went on to make comment about when *"you take money out of the organisation you become process driven"* which in change leadership terms they felt to be *"counterproductive"*. They felt that leaders had a responsibility to *"make sure that this doesn't happen, identify it when it does, and try to do something about it."* (B3 p. 22).

They then comment:

*"But you can only do that when you are working in a leadership team that is together on that and that is working together with the same vision, the same aims and the same principles. And that is the challenge."* (B3 p. 22).

I believe that this is the core of the difficulty and a risk to the continuance of change.

The senior leadership does not work as well as it could do and this issue does need

to be addressed. It is a joint responsibility that I feel at the moment is not being collectively worked through. That must happen – and soon.

A further respondent feels that there are difficulties with the organisation focusing on re-structuring. They talk about that *"is what classically people resort to"*. They then continue with discussions on re-structuring as helping sometimes but not being the solution (B4 p. 23). This I see as a real risk; I have referred to it before. Continual re-structuring becomes a defence to dealing with change more creatively if at all.

However, they go on to further reflections:

*"I think the officer part of council has changed. I'm not sure the politics or the position has changed as well. I think the political position they understand – that we need to reduce our budget – but I don't know if they actually really understand that things change delivery in a different way or shape in a different way, commissioning in a different way or help in a different way; and something that I've never used externally or anywhere else is that there is a shift to go from a paternal role to the fraternal role and*

*how we actually enable to sit alongside people in which we need to support and the businesses that we need to support is a key function.” (B4 p. 9).*

I think the risk and difficulty of not taking elected members along on the journey with you is the same as the risk of not taking staff and partners with you through that change process. I found the comment on paternalism and moving to a fraternal role very interesting. It was shared as a confidence as if they had not discussed this elsewhere. However, I have come across the same view being expressed by both B1 and B2. I fear that through lack of communication a further opportunity will be lost for creative and transformational change.

Finally, for this section:

*“It is awful for these colleagues, it's awful to reduce our people when you're actually trying to service people's requirements, what you're actually trying to ensure is to keep as positive as possible and that's actually quite difficult because they think that you're not being honest. You know: 'What are you trying to do? Can't we just drop it?' – You know. Well, anyway.” (B4 p. 11).*

I found this to be a heartfelt response. My scrutiny of this respondent within the interview context led me to believe that they were flippant and arrogant (ON6). As

my analysis deepens I am coming to the conclusion that perhaps it is more about them feeling lost and hurt – not knowing what to do to save 'their' work.

## 4.20 On Outcomes

This is the final concept theory. It relates to the achievement of outcomes, the measurement of outcomes and overall the impact of the outcomes achieved.

*"What you want to achieve in terms of outcome – but in this context this is actually the outcome that we think is going to happen, for these reasons – and it isn't what you want, there's a better way to achieve your objectives and it's by doing these things in this way to this frequency, in this timing, whatever." (B1 p. 6).*

This first statement recognises that leaders need to know what outcomes they are trying to achieve when embroiled in change. However, they are also aware that the outcomes are the planned result of the vision and as such should be explained and discussed in that context. It is an important part of the information that is shared and explained when leaders are seeking to influence other people to their point of view.



They also recognised the championing role that the local authority plays in representing the needs and views of others, particularly the most vulnerable.

*"A good leader [should] represent and challenge to get the best outcomes for your place." (B1 p. 7).*

This of course encompasses selling their vision whilst explaining how it can be realised.

Others talked about outcomes being kept in focus so that the overall direction is secured.

*"But I think other organisations or authorities could look at [it] in terms of making sure and through the coming together it does actually make a difference and we keep outcomes in focus. There is a risk we lose an outcome focused approach isn't there and we troop back into process." (B2 pp. 9-10).*

The outcome-focused approach they feel, is important to in order to resist being pulled back into process and detail. It supports the retention on vision, goals and direction. It cross-refers to balancing the national with the local, how you bring all

those tensions together whilst utilising opportunities that may occur within the change process.

Remaining outcome focused is a responsibility that leaders have in order to be able to bring people back to what needs to be done.

*"And people just describing lots of activities that make them feel as if they're doing something useful. But I think we as leaders have the responsibility to bring people back to an outcome focussed approach to what we're doing."*

(B2 p. 10).

That working together to achieve common understanding is central to partnership working both within and across the system.

*"The issue with reduced resources is having the ability of that collaboration and working together and trying to reach a common understanding of the outcomes that we need to achieve." (B8 p. 3).*

There is a similar but different focus on outcomes here. There remains an outcome focus but for slightly different underlying reasons. The comment above

is to keep people on track to achieve these. This respondent refers to collaboration within the arena of reduced resources so that common understandings can be achieved.

Others discuss achieving those outcomes and how you monitor that achievement, departmentally, corporately and across the district.

*"We've got the infrastructures in place and we've got the mechanisms in place actually to monitor what the outcome of that is and whether we're achieving that, be that at a local departmental level or at a corporate strategic and district wide level." (B3 p. 10).*

## **4.21 Initial Conclusions**

The political leadership felt that the stability of the local vision and direction was important which they felt was re-enforced by stability within the officer leadership, particularly within Children's Services. This was further supported by views shared within the officer leadership, where recognition was given to the stability over the last few years of the Executive as well as the senior leadership role. Indeed a

senior respondent stated clearly that there were no plans to make further changes in the overall leadership of the Children's Services Department, particularly in the light of the positive Ofsted inspection results. Stability was also alluded to within the change process. This was particularly emphasised within the context of the national change agenda which was described as turbulent and difficult to establish what the outcomes would ultimately be.

A further area of agreement on leadership was that of ensuring a good vision, being clear about where you wanted to go into the future. This was articulated in a variety of ways with comments such as:

*"A constant message."* (A1 p. 2)

*"A direction of travel without any handbrake turns."* (B1 p. 5)

*"Visioning, that long term visioning is really, really important."* (B1 p. 2)

*"Part of good leadership is keeping people focussed on the vision and the values and the principles that make up the ethos of a good quality children's service."* (B2 p. 3)

*"How are we going to understand, agree and articulate the vision for health and social care integration?"* (B3 pp. 5-6)

Alongside this – the commitment which comes to the fore regarding the need for a clear vision and direction – is the communication of that vision, as the last respondent quoted stated *"how are we going to understand, agree and articulate ..."* (B3 pp. 5-6). All those interviewed focused on the importance of communication, particularly when the change agenda was discussed. Some focused more on stakeholders and partners and the majority included clear and consistent communication with staff. All use a range of techniques to ensure that these messages are shared, ranging from public meetings to large staff meetings ('road shows'), newsletters, conferences, strategic meetings, leadership and management meetings, reports and consultations.

Interviewees focused on the importance of relationships both with stakeholders, partners and staff, linking this aspect clearly with the influencing role of leadership. A further clear aspect coming forward linked

into the importance of relationships was that of 'personal credibility' (B1) as a leader, but also as an organisation. There was agreement on priority for reputation, on a professional level but also at an organisational level.

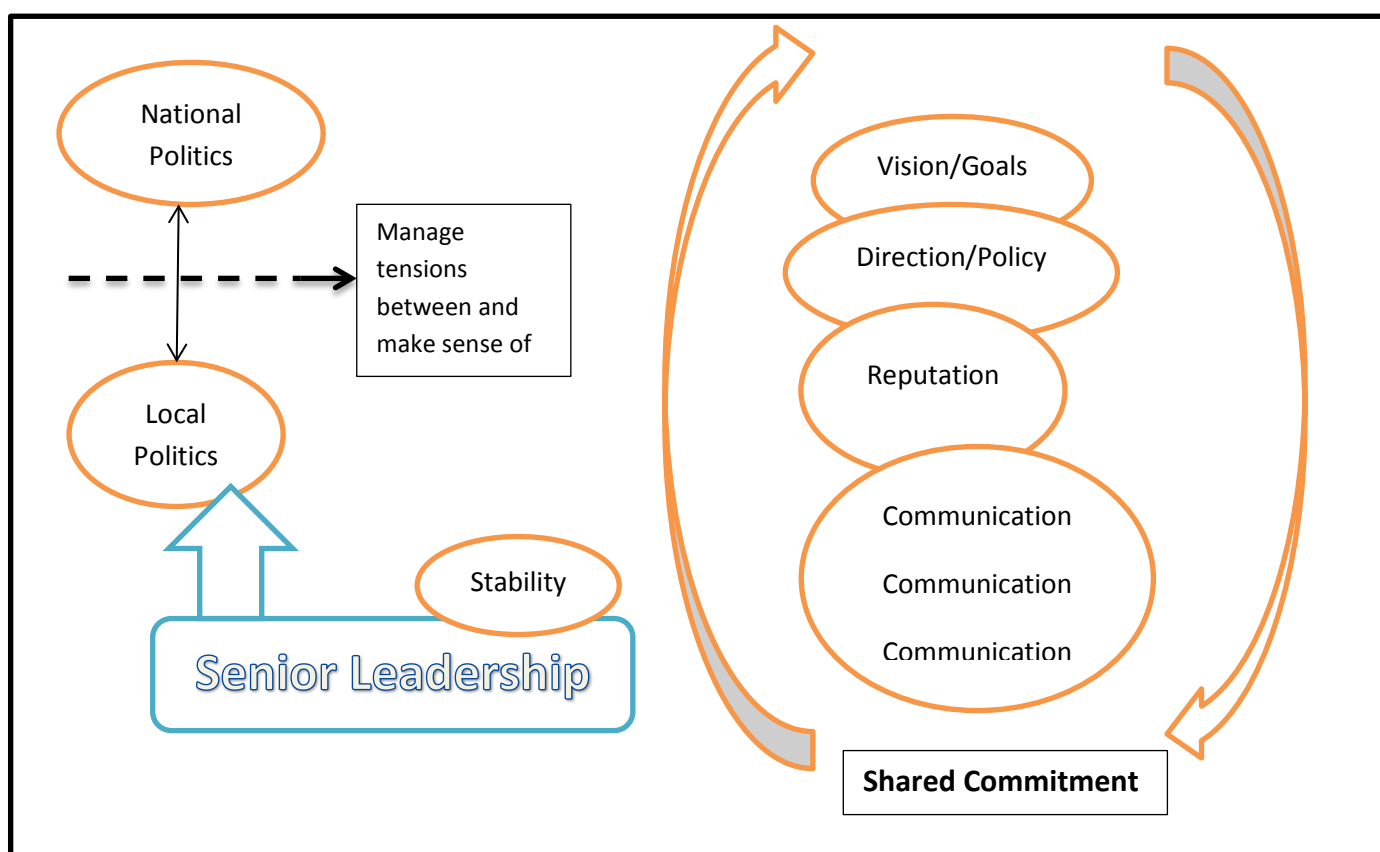
*"You have to be able to deliver, you have to make things happen and you build your credibility and confidence, as you go along, you earn the respect of your peers and of the people that you need to be able to influence." (B1 p. 3)*

*"I think you have to draw people round that shared commitment and priority so you do that by making sure you've got all the right arrangements in place whether it's through the Children's Trust, whether it's about that commitment to partnership and integration at all levels and at every opportunity making sure that happens." (B2 p. 2)*

Figure 4.1 below begins to model the shared areas of leadership found within the interview data, with stability within the senior leadership, managing and interpreting the tensions between national and local political directions and legislative pressures. Then on the right hand side of the model the interwoven aspects of vision making, goal orientation, giving direction and policy, underpinned with reputation (professional and organisational) which when working well together

leads to the shared commitment required to take the change programme forward for the benefit of local citizens.

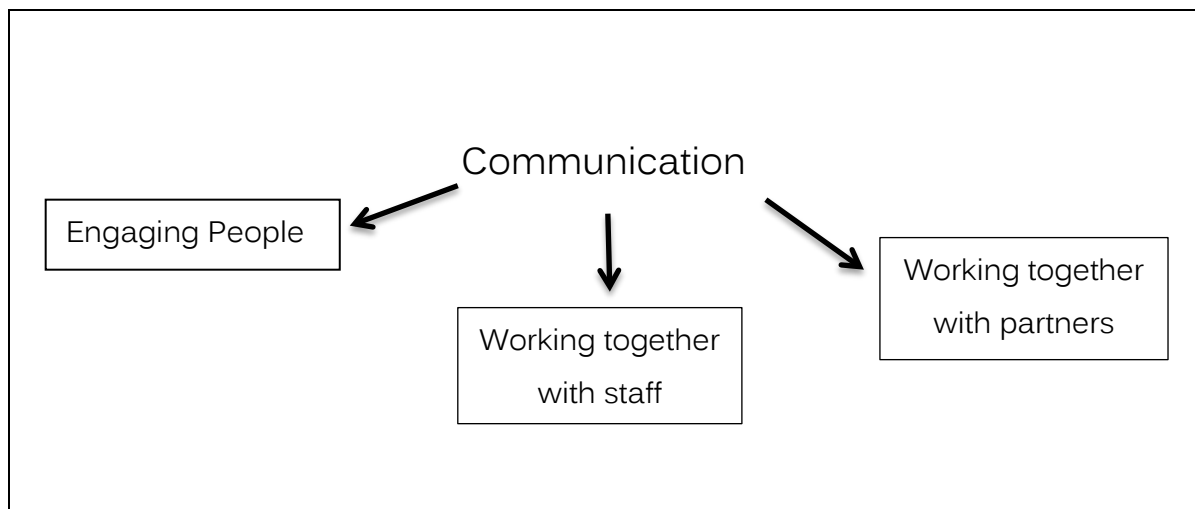
Figure 4.1: Shared Leadership Concepts



Whilst the above is broadly shared across the senior leadership team, there are some aspects of what could be described as positive leadership, together with an awareness of their own leadership styles and skills within a more limited number of its members.

The analysis ended up defining a range of construct theories which are only touched upon the above diagram. Communication has been reiterated and emphasised in figure 4.1 above. However there are various aspects of this which can be loosely grouped around this area.

**Figure 4. 2: The Three Strands of Communication**



This changes figure 4.1 and enables communication to be clarified.

The remaining construct theories together with their inter-relationships also need to be drawn.

The exploration of coherence-making concluded that leaders of change needed to explain and make sense of the complex. This makes it simple so that others can



understand it better. The relationships in the complex change networks, the policy shifts and the opportunities become easier to follow.

The reflective leadership enables learning and growth. It develops and highlights confidence – the confidence of self as well as the confidence of others in the leader. Focus and determination draws on this confidence and helps to build the reputation of the organisation, and its ability to succeed. Leaders of change accept responsibility, shared or singular; and alongside that embrace accountability for their actions, both for successes and for failures in performance. They recognise how to measure performance and know what success looks and feels like.

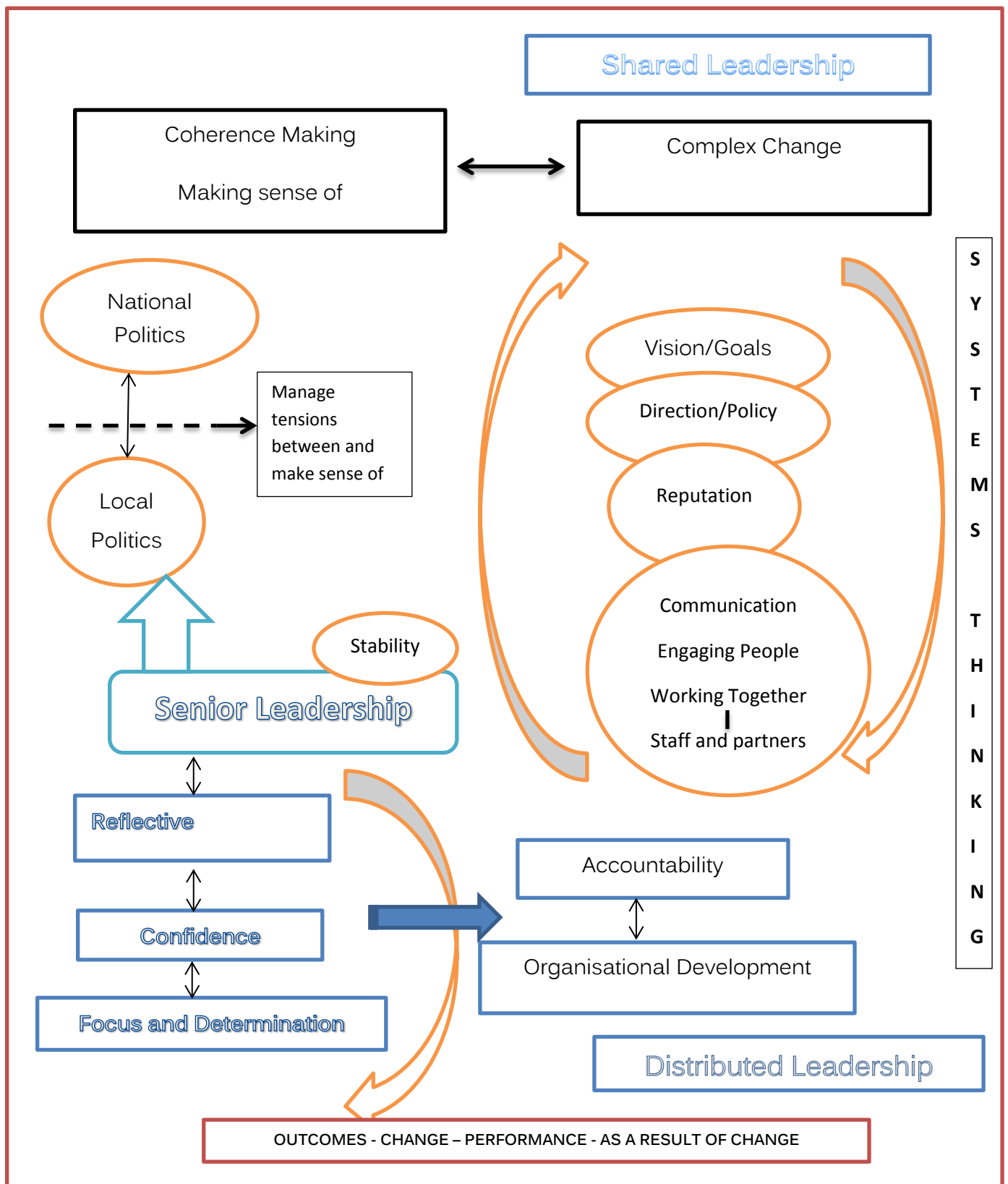
Systems thinking involves leaders of change knowing the system they are working in, and through knowing can make systemic change to become possible. This links to organisational development and the development of learning organisations.

The leadership of change carries risks and difficulties, not least of which is the potential for blockages to change. These can take many forms and have many

reasons. Blockages to change can be due to active disengagement, frustrations, fear of change or downright passivity. Whatever the reasons, these blockages must be dealt with, even to the extent of encouraging people away from the organisation. Leaving these to continue to be active within the system just makes the change process more difficult and could even cause it to fail completely.

Finally I explored outcomes: outcomes as a result of change; outcomes as a tool for change; outcomes as performance.

Figure 4.3: Leadership Construct Theories



# 5

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

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### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the original purpose of the research. It returns to the research questions that the case study sought to answer. Drawing on the literature review and the data analysis the research questions are explored.

In the research design I considered and refined the purpose of the research. This was in relation to leadership in the public sector and specifically the leadership of change. The context is that of delivering children's services and I used three specific areas of focus which can be summarized as follows:

- The reduction in resources arising from the economic crisis;
- The policy shift to convert schools to Academies and set up Free Schools;
- and
- The review and changes to safeguarding and child protection systems.

This purpose and context gave rise to the broad research question:

When legislation and policy is given in a top down manner with guidance for implementation what is the role of local leadership – is it organisational development, the development of systems, or just managing in an arena of change: when the change is complex and demanding time wise, how do leaders deal with the transformation required?

This overarching question was then broken down into further detailed questions in order to keep the research focused:

1. What leadership model can be developed to deal with a complexity of change to achieve positive outcomes?
2. What principles of leadership and organisational development should be harnessed to support such a change?
3. How can leaders develop tools and systems to anchor services in continuous improvement when the organisation is embroiled within a process of change arising from changes in national policy as well as a reduction in resources?
4. What are the common and divergent experiences, priorities, rewards, challenges and themes of leading change?

The purpose was to explore and understand the phenomena of leadership in practice. The initial exploration was undertaken through the literature review focusing on organisational development, systems reform and transformational leadership, concluding with a leadership model which transcends individual leadership, enables leaders to search for Simplicity within complex change, to reform systems within the local and national arena of politics and public value. The literature review served as a background resource rather than the starting point for the research design.

The research data was collected through a range of methods. This included interviews of senior leaders from the political arena as well as employees in a leadership role. Other methods included utilising the Freedom of Information Act; scrutiny of body language and verbal responses within meetings; observational notes of a personal nature from the process of interviews; minutes of meetings; reports to senior leadership meetings and change boards; letters from national government to local authorities and letters from Ministers to the House of Lords.

This enabled the development of a storyline throughout the research. It gave a rich picture of the case study area. Through this I have been able to make judgements concerning the best explanations I have been able to ascertain on the facts of the case study data. As I developed my research design I was clear that the case study would not use inductive theory for the purposes of generalisation. What I have used is abductive theory which has helped me to develop explanations or theoretical ideas. These have been presented in the research analysis chapter as construct theories.

I then draw on the theory arising from my literature review as well as the construct theory from the data analysis to answer the questions I set at the beginning of the research project. I answer these in the following sections, and then reflect on the findings against the overall question asked as an expression of the purpose of the research. Finally I highlight areas which would benefit, from my point of view, from future research.

## 5.2 Question One

What leadership model can be developed to deal with a complexity of change to achieve positive outcomes?

I have explored this through both the literature and the research data. Legislation and policy is central to the purpose of the research topic and as such I have looked at the impact of legislation primarily since the Children Act 2004 (HM Government, 2004). It has included such areas as The Education and Inspections Act (HM Government, 2006b); the Academy Act (HM Government, 2010); and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (HM Government 2010b). I also made reference to the Localism Act (HM Government, 2012) when this was referred to by respondents within the data collection.

The main guidance and policy areas I used within the context of change were that of the statutory guidance on the roles of the Director and the Lead Member of Children's Services. Alongside this I also made reference to 'Every Child Matters' in terms of outcomes sought (HM Government, 2002 and HM Government, 2003). I also made reference to Lord Laming's (2003) work resulting from the death of Victoria Climbié (Laming, 2003) and the review work of Munro (HM Government



2011). The change then has been and remains incessant and complex.

Respondents also referred to a great deal of national policy shift with one insistent that it was not coherent (A1).

What becomes evident in the research is the local authority as a political organisation, with clear differences between the way the public sector and private sector organises itself. There is a different ethos between them which was explored. These differences overall do lead the local authority to be lead in a business-like manner but not as a private sector organisation. Yes, this can add bureaucracy but overall it leads to the need to balance the national Political direction with local Political and community requirements.

Respondents did not feel that national policy was coherently integrated. An overriding feeling was one of balancing national legislation and policy with local policy for the benefit of the community they directly serve. This is unique for a local authority as part of the national governance arrangements in England which I believe is not present in national private sector organisations. It may be replicated to a certain degree within multi-national private sector organisations, but these

would not be led by political requirements and differences. It could be led by the necessity to meet various different national needs, with perhaps different legislation and cultures, but I don't think it would have the same impact on how the organisation operates.

What it does mean for the organisation in the case study is that there is a need for coherence-making. This was referred to by Fullan as an integral part of the personal leadership approach to change (Fullan, 2001). However, in the discourse from interviewees it is clear that this coherence-making is very much about sense-making and goes beyond looking for patterns within the change process as Fullan explains it.

I also looked at the concepts of shared leadership and distributed leadership. Here I defined shared leadership as taking place between equals and within the arena of partnership where responsibility and accountability are owned; where leaders are working towards shared and common goals. Distributed leadership, I feel, happens within the organisational structure where the ultimate responsibility and accountability is taken by the senior leader. It relates to working within a hierarchy

and again relates to shared and common goals. As discussed in chapter four effective leaders move comfortably between the two, know the difference and recognise when each approach is at work.

Similarly there is both transactional and transformational leadership. They are undertaken at different times within the change process. Transformational leadership is about transforming what is being done, making deep change to the system (Quinn, 1996). Transactional leadership takes place at the implementation stage; it is the negotiation and trade-off activity which is required to make the change happen (Burns, 1978).

Transformational leadership requires creativity – developed on the edge of chaos (Fullan, 2001). And a feeling of chaos is certainly the partner of complex change (B2). However, it is rooted in the overall vision or moral purpose. It is evident that when the leader is outcome-focused, constantly bringing people back to the vision, it generates moral purpose. From the analysis of the data it becomes clear that to achieve it the leader must retain focus and determination.

Focus and determination as an integral part of success in leading change came out quite strongly in the research data. Effective leadership stayed focused overall on the endgame; the vision and improved outcomes being sought. The determination to achieve these is integral to maintaining the focus. It is not a determination which overrides all other considerations. It is borne of moral purpose and helps to keep the leader on track. It requires confidence and courage.

The data also confirmed that communication is essential. However it needs to be effective and purposeful. It is not just about telling people about the changes. It supports the development of opportunism, where leaders who retain that all important overview can recognise and utilise a range of different opportunities as they arise. Indeed they can also create them (B2). These are then integrated within the process of change to achieve improved outcomes. The communication and linking of all of these enables the sense-making or coherence making discussed above. Leaders must understand change in order to use it for the common good (Fullan, 2001).

The data also tells us that communication is central to engaging with staff, bringing them with the leader and engaging them in change. It is just as applicable to communication with and between partners and peers. Effective communication at all levels with a range of people and groups of people allows transformation to be developed together and is then easier to implement (B1).

Without effective communication relationship building cannot take place.

Relationships are very important when a leader is looking to influence others. The arena of change of this case study takes leaders away from the command and control leadership which they may have previously enjoyed. It again requires confidence. Confidence develops credibility: personal, professional, and organisational. It speaks to reputation which was seen as very important to develop and maintain in this case study.

Working across the whole system was an area that the majority of leaders agreed with. This involves systems thinking and ultimately enables systemic change (B1). However, some respondents are still grappling with this concept in action and how

to apply it coherently (B8). It is something I believe, that the whole senior team needs to address.

Whilst exploring the leadership of change I came across strong evidence of barriers to change. These arose from frustration and inertia. It resulted in manipulation on the one hand and lack of action on the other. It is an area that must be addressed by the senior leadership, even if this results in people leaving the organisation.

However, change did take place despite these negative behaviours. Without them, I believe the change process would have been speedier and more effective.

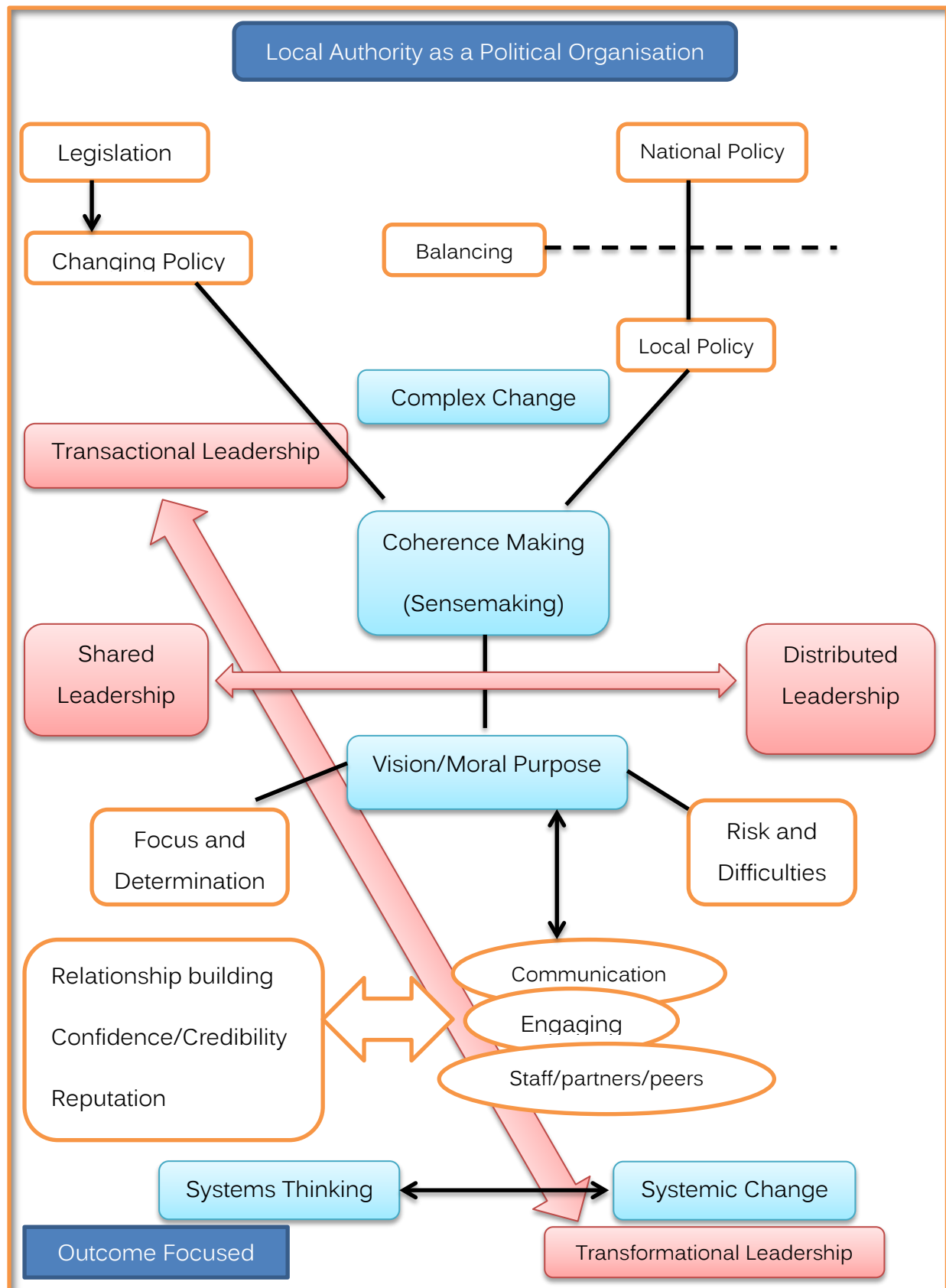
There are still aspects of the changed operating model which are viewed as not working (C8 and C9). Several respondents viewed this to be as a direct result of these negative behaviours. Others felt that it reflected a dysfunctional senior leadership team.

What I did not find in the literature was any reference to risk and difficulties. These were wide ranging and senior leaders were mindful of them. They acknowledged that risks needed to be taken, but they were carefully assessed and some were taken more easily than others. One area which was the subject of very careful

consideration was that of safeguarding and child protection. The ultimate risk here was that of a child's life. As such care was always taken to ensure that the organisation was aware of this potential and if any action within the change programme raised this risk, extra care was taken to avoid it.

This then leads to the development of the final model of leadership for change in relation to Children's Services.

Figure 5.1: Leadership Model Drawn From Research Conclusions





From the work so far on the case study there are some important construct theories emerging which develop leadership theory further. These are in relation to the need to balance national legislation and policy with local needs and interpretation. Arising from that is the need for senior leaders to undertake coherence-making for staff, partners and others so that the context of change and the emerging linkages and opportunities can be clearly understood by all. To be outcome focused is more than the development of a shared vision, it requires focus and determination. It allows leaders to keep the end picture constantly in mind and supports creativity and opportunism.

Barriers to change do need to be addressed, a further area which the literature did not address. A leader should always be testing the situation and reflecting on how the change process is progressing, however complex that may be. Not dealing with people who are not engaging in the change agenda will lead to difficulties and risks the success of the change programme overall.

Furthermore, the majority of literature I reviewed looked at and analysed the leader as an individual. However, there is a need to consider leaders working and

leading together whilst still recognising them as individuals with their own skills and experience. Working together does not make people in to a team automatically.

There is a need to build relationships which support honesty and openness.

Leaders can be personable, but should never be personal. Trust does not thrive with manipulation or inertia. Perhaps that is a question for future research: how do leaders develop the relationships which promote the atmosphere and culture to work together effectively? Does personal ambition get in the way of that?

### 5.3 Question Two

What principles of leadership and organisational development should be harnessed to support such a change?

One of the construct theories I explored was that of leading change for organisational development. I have already discussed within the literature the need to develop the structure of an organisation from the functions that need to be achieved. Once the functions have been decided it is necessary to then clarify the role of the various people involved at different levels of the organisation. This gives role clarity and reduces role stress. It enables clarity of focus for the job to be undertaken. Without it you are liable to what I am beginning to term as the

'butterfly flit'. This does have some resonance to the well-known terminology of the 'butterfly effect' where the movement of a butterfly's wing can have an effect in a completely different part of the world. This is based in chaos theory and the phrase was first coined by Lorenz in 1972 in his speech to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Wikipedia, *The Butterfly Effect*, 2013). The terminology of a 'butterfly flit' is a leader who acts as a butterfly, settling momentarily on one aspect or approach to change and then quickly moving onto a different one. And so it continues, 'flit', 'flit', and 'flit'. It is counter-intuitive to focus and determination. The result adds to the complexity of change, but in this case results in increased chaos with a confused and confusing change process (C4). It becomes very difficult to achieve success.

There was a tension within one major area of change. This was in respect of developing and delivering what was termed as the new operating model. The Changing Our Council programme introduced major and complex change. Many managers were removed from the structure to make savings. All back-office support structures were centralised. However, there was no role clarity developed.

Managers who remained within the new structure were left to manage as best they could with fewer resources and more staff to manage. The need to change management processes was recognised but was very slow in being put into place. The centralisation of back office staff was confused. It relied on numerous attempts to identify what posts undertook back office work. The resistance to moving staff was high and came from all levels of leadership and management. Some retained roles that others would expect to be within the centralised department in their own departments. The hub and spoke model was changed at the eleventh hour just to get the change moving forward. There was real role ambiguity. The new centralised department found it difficult to deliver with a wide range of conflicting expectations. It is still not working effectively.

The will to develop the organisation was clearly articulated. Changing the culture of the organisation was promoted. The vision for the council to become the 'employer of choice' was mooted (B1). But no real attention had been given to it. It was never defined. Staff are sceptical of the phrase, not understanding how an organisation can become an 'employer of choice' when it is still downsizing. Members of staff do not feel valued and that includes some senior leaders.

However, developing a learning organisation has begun in some areas (C1) with senior leaders using the opportunity of changing the systems for safeguarding and protecting children to engage with learning in a very deliberate way. Utilising academia and experts in their field, staff teams are learning, developing, reflecting and sharing good practice. It has been utilised successfully in one professional area. Developing a learning organisation in this way may not be transferable to the entire organisation in the same way.

Deliberate choices were made to develop different ways of working with schools in response to the Academy Act (HM Government 2010b). Senior leadership made extra efforts to develop partnership working between and within the family of schools in the district, irrespective of their structure or funding arrangements (B2). This has clearly developed shared leadership across the school system.

Organisational development has a higher profile within Children's Services than in other parts of the organisation. The work undertaken since the inception of the Children Act (HM Government, 2004) has promoted a culture for organisational

development which has supported the birth and growth of the Children's Trust and the Safeguarding Board as separate but linked organisations.

In order for the organisation to develop even whilst down-sizing the senior leadership team needs to focus on function before form, role clarity and the culture they wish to promote and grow. If this is about developing as an 'employer of choice' this should be defined as a clear vision and articulated well across all staff and partners. Is this one of the end goals that senior leadership wants to achieve? If it is then perhaps they can learn from this by reflecting on their leadership of change so far.

There is no doubt that there have been some successful aspects. Where success was achieved, it was through the range of approaches to leadership discussed above. Perhaps modelling the focus and determination rooted in a vision for this would progress the idea of becoming the 'employer of choice' to a successful conclusion. Alongside this developing an action research model for its implementation would promote the concept of a learning organisation at the same time.

## 5.4 Question Three

How can leaders develop tools and systems to anchor services in continuous improvement when the organisation is embroiled within a process of change arising from changes in national policy as well as a reduction in resources?

This question was not addressed in the literature review. It was expected that the analysis of the data would explore this area. The focus for me here is the concept of continuous improvement within the process of change. One of the difficulties within a complex change programme is the ability to keep a clear focus on what ultimately the leadership is trying to achieve.

There is clear evidence within the data of senior leadership remaining outcome focused and working with others to ensure that staff and partners did as well. The reasoning for coherence-making, to make sense of all the changes happening and to be opportunistic to make the necessary links was based on retaining this outcome focus.

Others saw the development and commitment to outcomes as a visioning tool to develop further collaborative work. This was slightly different to the focus on outcomes above and relates to developing shared outcomes in order to share resources in a fiscally challenging environment (B8).

It was certainly not an easy task to keep the focus on the improvement of outcomes within this complex change arena. The analysis showed that it required clear communication, engaging effectively with staff and working in partnership with people outside the organisation. Influencing skills were referred to often as was confidence. Developing credibility – personal, professional and organisational – was seen as important and helped to develop reputation.

Working across the system and knowing the system was symptomatic of effective change for some senior leaders. Not one leader described change as easy.

Overall the organisation has been able to remain focused on its public values (Brookes and Grint, 2010) even to the point of discussing with me the potential for



changes from paternalism to supported self-help for the community to resolve their own problems. Although there was no clarity at the time on how this could be achieved.

The performance management of the organisation has continued throughout the change programme in terms of measuring how effective service delivery has been and how impactful it is in terms of improved outcomes. The area of change with regard to child protection and safeguarding has noticed improved outcomes as the change progresses (C1). I feel that this has also been supported by senior leadership's focus and recognition on the risks and difficulties arising from the change programme.

## 5.5 Question Four

What are the common and divergent experiences, priorities, rewards, challenges and themes of leading change?

The common experience is that of success. Successful change has taken place, particularly the extent of down-sizing that has been achieved. Some respondents through their own reflections have appeared surprised that this has been achieved.

They all conclude that down-sizing is hard, very hard. The transactional leadership with its focus on task makes the actual process easier, but it remains hard.

There were other successes aside from achieving the balanced budget: notably that of transforming how the school system worked together and with the local authority. This was clearly achieved from a deliberate decision to make this happen. It was based initially on coherence-making (Fullan, 2001). Despite legislation and national policy the sense-making caused a transformational approach to education which was designed purposefully to meet local needs, in relation to increasing the achievement of children and young people. It has also resulted in an increase in the numbers of children and young people attending a school which has been judged good or better by Ofsted (D67).

Alongside this the change from process working to systems thinking as a result of the Munro review (HM Government, 2011) is being implemented effectively. This is based on modelling good practice as well as developing the learning organisation through the engagement of academia and highly respected regional and national practitioners.

But overall none of the aspects of change have been easy. All agree that it is hard.

Care of staff comes through strongly with recognition that some of those staff will be lost to the organisation through that down-sizing. The majority of course have dependents, mortgages and other such commitments. And the leadership realise that their lives will be changed and not for the better. Some leaders have expressed their concern about supporting staff emotionally with the awareness that they cannot respond on a personal level and this is also hard.

The divergent experiences that came through the strongest for me within the analysis are those in relation to the barriers to change: the personal disengagement experienced, for whatever reason; the inertia expressed and lack of action taken. Whether these were from fear of change or just not being clear where that change will lead either personally or as an organisation. It had the same effect of stopping or delaying change.

Priorities have certainly included the need to achieve a balanced budget.

However, concern that this is done with the least damage possible to the organisation and services has also been evident. This has been particularly with regard to front line services which have a direct impact on the community they serve (B1).

There has also been evidence of wanting to keep others outcome-focused, wanting to make sense of the changes and how that can be understood, and wanting to keep the organisation firm and true to the long term vision they had developed.

There has also been a priority for communication and engagement with staff partners and others (B3). Several reasons for this have been cited: to deal with the fear of change; to take staff and partners with them on the journey of change. A few have discussed working with trade unions to implement change. This did appear to be rather bureaucratic and time consuming to some. But the result, which I think can be considered as success, is the lack of negative reporting in the media for this organisation and perhaps more importantly, no direct employee action against it as far as I can ascertain.

There were several challenges emerging from the research data and I developed a construct theory on risks and difficulties. These included the challenge of making sure that the most vulnerable in the community continued to be protected (A2).

There was also consideration of a challenge on the horizon, where respondents felt that with the continuation of severe reductions in budgets difficult decisions would need to be made (B4). This was in relation to decisions to stop the delivery of some services. In other arenas there were discussions on the potential and real risk of some local authorities facing bankruptcy (D41).

Themes emerging from the leadership of change were around the tensions and balancing required between national and local agendas. This included the need for constant interpretation of change: coherence-making. Developing shared leadership alongside distributed leadership was a deliberate decision. Leaders were aware that they needed to be transformational as well as operating as transactional leaders. This required flexibility to move between the two styles appropriately. Dealing with complex change required clarity of direction which was retained through focus and determination. Confident leaders were able to

develop personal, professional and organisational credibility. This then allowed them to build and maintain reputation.

## 5.6 Summary

Finally I return to the broad question of my research. I ask – did the research answer the purpose I had defined at the beginning of my own journey?

When legislation and policy is given in a top down manner with guidance for implementation what is the role of local leadership – is it organisational development, the development of systems, or just managing in an arena of change: when the change is complex and demanding time wise, how do leaders deal with the transformation required?

The research and data analysis leads me to believe that the role of leadership in the complex change I have described falls mainly into managing an arena of change.

There has been some focus on organisational development but this needs to be explored further by the senior leadership team in order to develop the flexible and agile organisation that one respondent sought (B1).

The management of systems was focused on the whole system and led to systems thinking (A2: B1). But again this is an area that needs to be developed further for it to be used effectively across the organisation. Leaders are clear that they are leading across the whole system in respect of children's services. Systems thinking has been applied in two areas of delivery, that of the schools system and that of the social care systems. The social care system has developed, sought out and utilised the support of academia and other experts in the professional field effectively. This has enabled the development of a learning organisation (C1) to begin.

Transformation was achieved in the system for safeguarding and child protection. It was also achieved in the educational system with clear shared leadership across and between schools, which also involved the local authority. Both of these transformations were deliberately sought and implemented. Transactional leadership was used to implement changes as a result of down-sizing.

So in conclusion then, it appears to me that there have been a myriad legislation and policy changes from national government in particular since 2010 when this

research began. It has led to complex change and this is where the senior leadership has focused its energies.

There has been transformational leadership within two of the three areas which were the focus of organisational change.

The emerging principles of leadership and organisational development arising from the research included the need for clear role definition. The changes in the organisational culture promoted and enabled transformational leadership within the change arena. Alongside this are the five leadership components of:

- moral purpose;
- understanding change;
- relationship building;
- knowledge creation and sharing; and
- coherence-making.

And the three personal characteristics of effective leadership:

- enthusiasm;



- hope; and
- energy.

As cited by Fullan (Fullan, 2001). However the research has built on this theory by developing the understanding of coherence-making in relation to making sense of the complexity of change within a political arena. Here I am referring to the balancing of the requirements of national legislation and policy in order to develop this appropriately for the local area.

Fullan (2001) was also clear that in order to be effective in complex times leaders must be guided by moral purpose. Here the literature was explained further through the research with its exploration of outcome focused work. The outcome focus developed and retained by the leadership was utilised through clear relationship building. This led to influencing skills being used and shared leadership developed across the system of education. This calls directly to the authentic leader for transformational change required to meet the needs of reduced resources and changed ways of working.

It is essential for leaders to understand the change process and in so doing, alongside a healthy respect for the complexities of change, achieve greater success. It led to a deepening of moral purpose.

Relationship building was just as important as a principle of leadership as was organisational development. Here effective leaders constantly fostered purposeful interaction and problem solving. Unfortunately they were not always wary of gaining easy consensus to change, and enabled barriers to change to remain unchallenged.

Effective knowledge creation and sharing was, I believe, developed through the previous three principles with the additions referred to. Effective leaders committed themselves to constantly increase knowledge inside and outside the organisation. This was clearly evidenced through the use of academics and other professionally recognised experts to develop the learning organisation for systems change within safeguarding and child protection.

Complexity kept leaders on the edge of chaos, where creativity resided. This meant that effective leaders tolerated enough ambiguity to keep creativity alive, as well as seeking coherence. This coherence is a perennial pursuit enabling leaders to deal with the disequilibrium inherent within complex change (Fullan, 2001).

Further to this the principle of coherence making led to the exploration of the literature on Simplexity developed by Kluger (2008) where analysis assisted individuals to look at the complex and make it simple, enabling the coherence-making to be shared more easily with staff, partners and others. It certainly led to the development and success of the transformational change process.

# 6

## CONCLUSIONS

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### 6.1 Introduction

In this last chapter I reflect on the research and analysis in order to draw the final conclusions from my work to date. I begin by looking at the limitations of the research. From there I discuss any implications which I consider contributes to knowledge and academic debate, concluding with implications for practice and policy.

### 6.2 Limitations of the Research

My research has focused on one overall case study of one local authority, following some of the changes which have happened over the last two years. It has focused on leading change in children's services, noting the differences between the step changes from the creation of children's services and the more chaotic changes as the demands on local government have grown.

However, the case study, whilst offering evidence which answers the research questions only explains what is happening in one local authority. It was undertaken during a time of chaotic change which has not finished. Indeed the pace of change will continue for several years to come. Furthermore, it has given a rich picture at this moment in time only. Further research, either through case studies elsewhere or other comparative work would be able to build on the work so far and test out further the concepts developed in this study. It is only after further research that generalisation claims can be looked at (Thomas, 2011).

### **6.3 Implications for Academic Debate**

The following are areas which have arisen from the research data through the development of the construct theories where further academic debate could be focused. They arise from the analysis and the construct theories I developed therein. I deal with them separately but recognition should be given to the linkages that I consider exist between them. The conclusions lead to further research areas, but also should promote reflection and learning amongst leaders of children's services, local authorities with the responsibilities for the same, as well as national policy makers who are effecting change on this agenda.

### **6.3.1 Differences between the Private and the Public Sectors**

The first area which I think should be explored further through academic research and professional debate is that of differences between the organisation of a public body in comparison to a private body. I discussed in chapter one the focus of most literature on the private sector when discussing change. There were two exceptions to this that I considered. These were in respect of the work of Fullan (2001: 2006: 2010: 2011a: 2011b:2013) where the focus of his research was the evaluation of national strategies within Education. This was on the working of a national programme and its application within schools. It did not focus on the local authority which supported this implementation. The second exception was in the work of Brookes and Grint (2010). However their focus was on public leadership within the civil service, as the officer administration core for national government again it did not focus on local government.

I also reviewed the work of Heifetz (1994: 2002) as well as the work he did with colleagues Grashow and Linsky (Heifetz et al., 2009). These were authors cited in

leadership training for aspiring Directors of Children's Services. They based their findings on work undertaken as consultants within the private sector, although latterly they had transferred into working with higher level government officers/ministers and not-for-profit organisations.

The interviewees within this research had particular views that there were differences between senior leadership roles within the public sector in comparison to the private sector. This was in relation to the political nature of local authorities, together with the emphasis on serving the public of the local authority area whereas they viewed the private sector as a profit making organisation for its shareholders. It was from this analysis that I surmised four differences between the sectors.

**1: The political nature of local government.** Due to the political nature of the public sector there is potential for tensions between national and local government in respect of party politics which come into play. This is particularly so where local government is under the governance of a political party which is different in its make up to that of national government. If we compare the structuring of national

government with local government we could argue that similar structures are present in the private sector regarding national and international companies with regional and local subsidiaries. However, there are different governance arrangements in place. Where a national or international conglomerate holds sway in leadership and governance terms with their subsidiaries, this is not true of national and local governments. Here, each is independent of the other within the leadership and governance of the public sector. National government is dependent on legislation to implement policy and direction. Local government remains independent. They are both directly elected and singularly constituted bodies in their own right.

**2: High levels of regulation and inspection.** The local authority is subject to high levels of regulation and inspection, particularly in the area of children's services, including its schools. This direct inspection regime through Ofsted, brings with it judgments and gradings of the services delivered. It also brings the ability for direct intervention depending on the findings, with the ultimate sanction of the removal of services from the local authority. This is generally in respect of the private sector taking over the responsibility of that delivery at the highest level. Although the



private sector is accountable for the law of the country in which they operate, the intervention as a result of, for example, a health and safety inspection, the government has no right of intervention. Should intervention be necessary this is achieved through the legal system of the judiciary and does not involve the threat of their services or products being 'given' to other companies.

**3: The relationship between employed staff and elected members.** The local authority is a democratically elected organisation. The majority party forms the administration and sets policy and direction for service delivery. All senior leaders hold politically restricted posts. This means that they may not engage in political activity or campaign for any particular party. It is clear that elected members represent the interests of their constituents, that is, the residents from the electoral wards they have been elected from within. Shareholders in the private sector represent themselves and their own interests. In general terms that is about the profitability of the company overall. Both have an interest in reputation, but I conclude from my research to date that this is more so for elected members where their work is constantly under public scrutiny. It is this representational aspect that sets apart shareholders in the private sector from elected members in the public

sector. Additionally in the public sector there is a great deal of scrutiny of decision making undertaken formally through its committee structures. These committee structures which are set up to scrutinise the work of the council are generally led by the opposing party to the administration. It introduces a further level of politics into the running of a public body where issues of political disagreement are brought into the public domain. Therefore relationships, communications and trust for elected members, and as a result the employed senior leadership, is different to that of shareholders within the private sector.

**4: The relationships with staff and that of trade union engagement.** There are clear structures of unionisation and formalised consultation processes within local authorities. Proposed changes to budget or delivery are considered within these formal structures which are independent of general consultations and direct communications with staff. It causes the consideration of change to become bureaucratic and slows down the process of that change. This was clearly brought out in my research and hence my analysis included reflections on the previous history of unionisation with the resultant difficulties at a national level. The private sector appears more confident with less engagement through unions to

meet their business needs. Politicians are responding to the plurality of society, balancing these to gain a majority agreement. In the longer term this supports their re-election – a re-election which is dependent on every person over the age of 18 in their constituency. Shareholders on the other hand are elected from within the body of shareholders, a smaller number who in general terms are only concerned about the health of the company and its bottom line.

Do these differences call for different leadership approaches, particularly within the complex change processes that local government faces at this time? I consider that they do.

### **6.3.2 Coherence-Making**

Fullan (2001) described 'coherence-making' as a way of discerning patterns in the delivery of change. However, the respondents' own meaning for coherence-making was beyond discerning patterns. They felt that they needed to make sense of the policy and legislation being developed by national government in order to explain it and make the links between them where they could. It was important to them to be able to undertake a balancing role as senior leaders where national

government sets policy and direction for England which may not be convergent with the local majority leading party within the council. Therefore for them coherence-making was and is about making sense of the national picture. This was particularly so in respect of legislation and the need to interpret this for local implementation. They saw themselves as having a shared leadership role between officers and elected members and were concerned that legislation should not undermine the work of the council locally. Senior leaders felt strongly that their role was not about just putting national policy into practice locally, but also about challenging this where necessary without becoming embroiled in party politics. They felt that they were not an agency of national government, but a tier of government in their own right.

A large part of their role was to translate these complexities into what should happen and protect junior staff and residents locally from the changing tides of government. They also felt that national government had no clear understanding of the outcomes and impact locally. They retained a recognition that across the broader leadership the focus was always on delivering services to meet local needs. This I felt brought to life the moral purpose as discussed by Fullan (2001)

and that of public value described by Brookes and Grint (2010). Senior leaders, in the main, held true to making sense of the drivers for change, the rationale and logistics for the complexity of change being experienced and described within the case study.

Respondents viewed coherence-making as clearly a part of their leadership role and used it to shape local policy and direction. A good example of this was the deliberate decision to develop partnership working across and between all schools within the local authority. This was at a time when national policy and legislation was seeking to disrupt this relationship, fragmenting the system of education delivery. National government appeared to be promoting localism on the one hand, whilst centralising the control of schools under the auspices of the Secretary of State for Education, at the same time.

This is undoubtedly a challenging aspect for the leadership of change, but senior leaders were confident with this role and with their ability to undertake it. They recognised that their resultant proposals had to be shared with staff, partners and stakeholders so that they could more fully understand how the changes fit together

and supported the overall vision for the district. They felt that it was important that others understood the purpose of these changes, which also helped to reduce the fear of change inherent within individuals. This perpetual engagement with others and clear communication of the complexity of change made simple – the Simplicity developed by Kluger (2008) and referred to by Fullan (2011b) enabled a staff and partners to become part of the change process whilst reinforcing the moral purpose that they all shared.

This greater understanding also supported the leadership to be opportunistic within the change programmes. This meant that where opportunities arose to shape change further they were more easily undertaken.

### **6.3.3 Distributed and Shared Leadership**

In my analysis of working together with staff a thread emerged which discussed the leadership and engagement of staff in a way that developed a shared responsibility for developing and implementing change. I referred to this as distributed leadership where senior leaders distributed the role of leading change. They did this through management structures whilst retaining the overall responsibility for

the success or otherwise of the change process. They retained the power of their leadership role within the organisation including the power of veto.

In direct contrast to this the analysis of working together with partners highlighted a difference in the leadership role. Their role shifted from the potentiality for command and control to one of influence. This shift in dynamic led to the development of shared leadership between equals in contrast to that of distributed leadership within a hierarchical structure.

Both approaches are dependent on relationship building but they differ slightly in their execution. Within distributed leadership approaches, that is, with staff, the relationship is confirmed by the respondents as that of 'care of staff'. In other words the culture of the organisation reflects an approach to staff which is supportive overall, involves them in the change process and where necessary protects them from a blame culture. This personable approach to relationships with staff does offer its own problems. There is a fine line between a leader being personable and being personal within relationships. Of course there is nothing wrong *per se* in developing a more personal relationship with staff. However,

where a leader then has to deal with reduced budgets with resultant reductions in staffing levels, the personal makes it more challenging to achieve. Many respondents referred to the reduction in staff as extremely hard. Some talked about the need not to get involved on that personal level during these change processes and how it was hard to remain supportive while not becoming embroiled in their personal fears regarding potential redundancy situations.

The focus here though is that of distributive leadership and not all staff were at risk of redundancies. Leaders developed and maintained relationships to ensure that staff felt confident about and were able to be involved in that leadership role in order to support the change processes. Clear and effective communication was central to developing these relationships and enabling managers to simulate the same relationships with their staff. Hence the distributed leadership worked across the organisation.

The relationship with partners is different. Although senior leaders may feel some aspects of the need to 'care for' this was different to the care of staff approach within their own organisation. Here the relationship was about the need to



influence partners to take decisions which impacted on the overall goals of the change process. This takes the leadership role from that of coherence-making to that of clear communication in a way which will influence partners to work together through the development of common goals. It again reflected upon developing the 'shared moral purpose' of Fullan (2001) and the 'public value' of Brookes and Grint (2010). It promoted a shared leadership approach, recognising the independence of the different organisations involved and demanded a relationship between equals.

#### **6.3.4 Outcome Focused**

Several respondents talked at length about achieving positive outcomes, not just through the change process, but ultimately for the children, young people and families within the local authority area. The analysis drew attention to senior leadership being outcome focused. It draws on moral purpose (Fullan, 2001) and public value (Brookes and Grint, 2010) but goes beyond that in its constant articulation as a method of focusing staff and partners on the ultimate aim to achieve positive outcomes. It requires focus and determination on the part of senior leadership.

I consider that this needs further academic debate because of this ultimate approach. The 'moral purpose' of Fullan (2001) can be seen as an individual value carried and felt by an individual leader. 'Public value' from the work of Brookes and Grint (2010) relates to an outcome in itself, in that all of the work results in public value, whatever that may be defined as. Being outcome focused means that the leadership shares that view with others and influences them to share it as well. It enabled leaders to remain focused on the ultimate goals of children's services throughout a complex change programme.

There are undoubtedly links again to the coherence-making referred to above as well as the concepts of distributed and shared leadership. All rely on good communications skills and the ability to work closely and personably with others. These skills are all inter-related but developed and used together have a larger impact than they would have done if just one or two of these approaches are utilised.

## 6.4 Implications for Practice

I am focusing on what can be learnt from the research which will support the development and implementation of leading complex change in practice. There are many aspects of leadership of complex change that I have highlighted through the concept theories developed through the analysis. Some of them have been suggested for further academic debate, and these need to be reflected upon in practice. However there are particular areas which I consider also have implications for practice. These are:

**1: That of transformational and transactional leadership** and the need to be able to undertake the leadership role in and between both. Fullan (2001) discusses the creativity that can be developed on the 'edge of chaos' and it is this creativity which leads to transformational leadership. Utilising these opportunities within complex change to transform the way the local authority works is important. The level of savings required through the reduction in budgets cannot be achieved through efficiencies being driven through existing services. As a result the local authority, along with others, will need to look at how they can transform themselves for the future.

However, within the implementation of that transformation, there is a need for transactional leadership, moving towards the edges of command and control in order to undertake the routines necessary to implement those changes. This then moves the complex change into a more manageable linear change process at the point of implementation. Leaders need to feel confident about moving between the two leadership roles appropriately and in a timely manner.

**2: Systems thinking** and how this can be applied consistently across the senior leadership team. Working across the whole system was an area that the majority of leaders agreed with. This they felt involved systems thinking and ultimately this would lead to systemic change. However, the analysis also evidenced that some respondents were still grappling with that concept and how to apply it coherently. This I think gives rise to the need that systems leadership should be explored more fully within the senior leadership team as an approach to leading complex change.

**3: Putting the team into senior leadership team.** Some evidence was raised through the analysis that the senior leadership team did not work well together. I think that consideration needs to be given to a wider reflection on this so that the

areas of weakness within the team can be explored and addressed. Indeed some respondents felt that the lack of action in dealing with dissenters to change was evidence of a dysfunctional senior leadership team.

**4: Dealing with the barriers to change.** There was strong evidence of resistance to change arising from the data. These were highlighted as either inaction or active subversion of the processes, arising from inertia or frustration in that order. There are difficulties in not addressing potential barriers to change which can result aspects of the change process not taking place partially or fully. In this case study the centralisation of aspects of what is termed as 'back-office support' was delayed and blocked by individuals who either did not fully understand the change or did not agree with it. If the leadership team does not spend time reflecting on how the change process is progressing, however complex that may be frustrations can arise in other parts of the senior leadership team. Not dealing with barriers to change risks the success of the change programme overall.

Furthermore the local authority should consider how it can become 'an employer of choice'. This has been cited as an ambition, but what this actually means or how the organisation can achieve it is unclear.

## **6.5 Implications for Policy**

The research included reflections and analysis of legislation and policy from national government and the arising complexity of change which this has introduced into the local authority. Respondents and other evidence led to the consideration of a national government which is introducing rapid change across all areas of government. This appears to be conflicting and incoherent. It has given rise to high levels of concern within the local authority.

The change process has been referred to as 'hard', and 'very hard'. The process of applying the new operating model for back office staff was confused and the reduction in management posts led to those left behind in the organisation to manage as best they could with fewer resources and more staff to manage.

Further consideration needs to be given to the culture of the organisation which the senior leadership wants to put into place. The complexity and speed of change

has led to a feeling of 'the only constant is change'. This means that the senior leadership moves quickly from deciding on one change to looking at how to complete the next change. Greater consideration needs to be given to the detail of what happens once change has taken place.

The implication for policy then is about how change is focused moving forward once the first aspect of change has taken place. This is in relation to structural change in the main and therefore calls for policy development within the area of human resource management. It needs to encompass the expression and development of the organisation as an employer of choice as well as how the organisation can best move towards becoming a learning organisation across its total breadth. At the moment the concept of a learning organisation has been introduced in one area only, that of children's social care.

The change programme introduced has certainly been complex and the speed demanded from it has at times led to a feeling of chaos. A further area for consideration for policy development is for the local authority to consider developing policy which will enable it to work with national government in order to

slow down the pace of change and clearly discuss the future role for local authorities. One of the respondents discussed the need to 'manage upwards' including the approach of challenging policy and direction from national government. There would be a risk to this in terms of being alone in this challenge and change of relationship, particularly in terms of reputation. It may be best to consider how this can be achieved jointly and severally with other like-minded local authorities.



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## Appendix One: Failure to Intervene

**The Twelve Separate Occasions when public authorities failed to intervene in Victoria Climbié's life as cited by Norman Garnham, QC: Counsel to the public inquiry.** (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2062590.stm>).

- 1) During the spring of 1999, Kouao visited Ealing Social Services department 14 times, 7 of those she brought Victoria with her. Although her visits were in relation to housing support so that she could stay in England, social workers recorded two concerns. One that the relationship between Marie Theresa and Victoria were not that of mother and daughter and secondly that Victoria's appearance was dishevelled and akin to a child on an 'action aid' poster;
- 2) Ealing Social Services found them accommodation in Brent and warned their Social Services department that Victoria Climbié was in danger. In June 1999, a distant relation, through marriage, contacted social workers in Brent that Victoria was in danger. This information appears to have been lost and social workers deny that the team received details of a potentially serious child protection case. However, two social workers made an unsuccessful attempt to visit the family on 14 July, almost a month after the warning. No further action was taken by the authority.
- 3) On the 14 July 1999, Victoria was admitted to Central Middlesex Hospital for the first time. She was taken there her child minders daughter, who was concerned that scratches and cuts on Victoria's body were through non-accidental injury. The receiving doctor did not accept Victoria's aunt's explanation for the scratches and cuts and referred Victoria to a paediatrician in the hospital. However, she over-ruled these concerns and allowed Victoria home with her aunt.
- 4) Kouao visited Ealing Social Services the day after Victoria was discharged from hospital regarding her housing issues, and the case was closed.



- 5) Victoria was again admitted to the same hospital on 25 July 1999 with scalding to her head and face. Social workers did not ask Victoria what had happened until she had been in hospital for two weeks, by which point she was being discharged to the care of her aunt. By this time both Victoria and her aunt were living with Kouao's boyfriend, Carl Manning. The case was not with Haringey Social Services, who assigned a social worker with no experience of complex cases. Doctors believed that Victoria had been abused, but did not realise that the social worker and the police were not aware of the evidence. The Police Constable assigned to investigate the case did not visit Victoria prior to her discharge from hospital as she was concerned that she may contract Scabies – the ultimate diagnosis of the paediatrician.
- 6) A senior social worker in Haringey referred the case to the NSPCC run Tottenham Child and Family Centre on 5 August 1999. The manager of the Centre was confused as case file suggested it would not be an appropriate case for them to deal with. She spoke with the senior social worker for clarification and was advised that the family no longer lived in the borough and the case was closed. At the inquiry the senior social worker claimed that he had no memory of this conversation.
- 7) The Hospital claims that a referral to a community health visitor was made, but this was refuted and counter claims made of no papers or instructions being received to follow up the case.
- 8) A social worker visited the flat where Victoria and her aunt were now living with Carl Manning on 16 August 1999, with a second visit taking place just days after Victoria was being forced to sleep in the bath. The social worker spoke to Manning and Kouao, claiming she saw no evidence of abuse, but did not see or speak with the child nor did she address the fact that Victoria was not at school or receiving education.
- 9) On the 13 August 1999, the paediatrician at North Middlesex Hospital wrote to Haringey Child Protection link, voicing her concerns for Victoria, referring

to her as a 'child now lost to follow-up, somewhere in Haringey'. The recipient of the letter claimed that she made a referral to the case worker in social services. The case worker denied receiving that referral.

- 10) A second letter from the paediatrician, containing medical evidence of abuse, was sent on 2 September 1999. The social worker recipient claimed that the letter had been delayed for 7 days, received when she was on holiday and that on her return she raised it with the case worker. The case worker again denied this, claiming that if she had received this information she would have 'run screaming to her manager'.
- 11) On the 1 November Kouao telephoned Haringey Social Services department, alleging sexual abuse by Carl Manning on Victoria. Although the inquiry felt that this was probably untrue, it did give social workers the opportunity to investigate. The following day Kouao contacted the department again withdrawing her allegations. However, a case conference was called to discuss the case which resulted in 15 action points being agreed, all of these related to contacting Kouao, Manning and Victoria.
- 12) The social worker attempted to contact Kouao three times, but receiving no answer, went away. She spoke with her manager, sharing that she felt that it was possible they had returned to France (although there was no evidence for this assumption). Haringey closed the case on 25 February 2000, the same day that Victoria Climbié was declared dead at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington.

## Appendix Two: Lord Laming's Recommendations

**Key Recommendations of Lord Laming Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié accepted by the then Government in January 2003.** (House of Commons, Health Committee, 2003)

1. The paediatric units throughout the country should be instructed to review their arrangements for ensuring continuity of care, supervision of junior medical staff and medical audit. (Paragraph 36)
2. We urge the Department of Health to examine whether current health service priorities have had deleterious effects on local priorities for children and families. (Paragraph 44)
3. We agree with the arguments made by the ADSS, and in the past by the King's Fund, that there should be an independent review of funding for social care, along the lines of the Wanless review of the NHS. We recommend that the Government should commission an urgent review of the factors influencing demand for social care for children and adults, and consider the adequacy of resources currently allocated. (Paragraph 46)
4. If, as Lord Laming believes, the Victoria Climbié case was not unique, but highlighted widespread and major deficiencies in the implementation of the Children Act, this raises issues that Government should address. We believe that the Children Act 1989 remains essentially sound legislation. However, we are concerned that the provisions of the Act which sought to ensure an appropriate response to the differing needs of children are being applied inappropriately, used as a means of rationing access to services, and have led to section 17 cases being regarded as having low priority. The Laming Inquiry recommended that consideration should be given to unifying the Working Together guidance and the National Assessment Framework guidance into a single document, setting out clearly how the sections of the Act should be applied, and giving clear direction on action to be taken under

sections 17 and 47. We strongly support this recommendation. (Paragraph 49)

5. We were somewhat surprised by the methodology adopted for the second phase of the Inquiry, which appeared to us to be a particularly selective model. It seems to us that a more broadly based investigative approach might have been of greater value. Lord Laming defended his choice of method on the basis of the need to “strike a balance between a reasonable examination of the issues and the amount of time and effort and expense that would be necessary to go down other routes.” In view of the arguably selective methodology used in developing the full recommendations from the Climbié Inquiry, we recommend that the Government should ensure the forthcoming Green Paper allows full consultation with the widest possible audience and stakeholders. (Paragraph 53)
6. We urge the Government to use the opportunity of its forthcoming Green Paper on children at risk to remove the increasingly anomalous reasonable chastisement defence from parents and carers in order fully to protect children from injury and death. (Paragraph 55)
7. We believe it is essential that further structural change and upheaval is not imposed unnecessarily on local government. We therefore recommend that the Government should consider carefully whether the new structure proposed by Lord Laming offers the best fit with arrangements that have emerged following the Local Government Act 2000, and whether revisions are required to ensure new national and local accountability arrangements are properly located within local government structures and mechanisms. (Paragraph 61)
8. If a child protection system has different structures, systems and functioning in different areas, this has the potential to cause serious difficulties. Any arrangement that has the potential to tackle the boundaries between health and social care, and other local services, has much to commend it, and we

are interested in the role that might be played by Children's Trusts. However, the model is at present extremely vague. The guidance issued in January 2003 made it clear that there was no single approach to Children's Trusts and that a variety of models might be developed. While we recognise that this could encourage diversity and locally responsive services, we are concerned that the model is currently too vague and there is a danger of new structures and mechanisms running ahead of any coherent strategy. We recommend that the forthcoming Green Paper should provide further clarification on the contribution that might be expected of Children's Trusts, and the nature of the preferred model. (Paragraph 64)

9. The establishment of a national database for all children under the age of 16 would not necessarily in itself provide an alternative to the existing Child Protection Register, and the arguments around both of these elements need to be separated. (Paragraph 68)
10. We believe that establishing a national database for children along the lines envisaged by the Laming Report would represent a major practical and technical challenge that should not be underestimated. However, this is not an argument for not establishing it, and we endorse Lord Laming's recommendation that there should be a feasibility study to explore the value and practicality of setting up a national database for children, and to compare the respective merits of such a system with the Government's own initiative on developing an effective Identification, Referral and Tracking system. (Paragraph 70)
11. We accept, as Lord Laming has argued, that the precise structures that need to be put in place are to some extent a matter of opinion. However, we believe that the experience in Wales points to the value in pursuing the role of a Children's Rights Commissioner, and we do not believe that this role could be fulfilled by the Chief Executive of a new national agency. We also believe that it is important to recognise the primacy of addressing children's

well-being, and there are risks of this becoming diluted within a general responsibility for children and families.

We recommend that the Government consider, as a matter of priority, the case for establishing a Children's Rights Commissioner as part of any fundamental review of structural arrangements for child protection arising from the Laming Inquiry. (Paragraph 76)

12. We endorse the recommendation made by the Social Care Institute for Excellence in their position paper on private fostering, that those who provide private fostering services should be subject to a registration process that, as a minimum safeguard, ensures they meet certain basic standards of care. (Paragraph 82)
13. We agree with the Inquiry Report that in future there must be a clear line of accountability "from top to bottom, without doubt or ambiguity about who is responsible at every level for the well-being of children." We urge the Government to put in place the necessary structural reforms to ensure this unbroken and explicit line of accountability is established as a matter of the utmost priority. (Paragraph 83)
14. We are aware that the Government has already taken steps to implement some of Lord Laming's recommendations. However, given the gravity of the situation, we call for the Department to submit to us by the end of 2003 a memorandum indicating progress made to date in implementing each of the recommendations made in the Report. (Paragraph 84)

## Appendix Three: Research Identity Memo

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## Appendix Four: Permission for Access

Cindy Peek

[REDACTED]

Chief Executive

[REDACTED]

Director of Services for Children and Young People

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5 February 2010

[REDACTED]

### Research Case Study for PhD

I am writing formally to you both to request permission and your joint support to undertake research in order to achieve my PhD. I am studying with the support of the University of Birmingham and am requesting that I can focus on [REDACTED] using the case study approach to my

studies. At no time will [REDACTED] be identified as the centre of my research nor will any individual be identified by name.

The focus of my research is leadership of and within Children's Services and I attach a more detailed brief of what I hope to achieve, including the ethical principles I will be following.

Although my research will be centred on Children's Services it will need to be undertaken within the overall context of the planned changes to the Council and its administration.

The research instruments I will be using are flexible and may include some action research, leading to evaluation and impact assessment. They will include activities such as on line questionnaires, reflective analysis, interviews - structured and unstructured, plus some possible focus groups. All recordings of interviews will be shared and agreed with participants before being used for analysis. People will be approached individually and severally in order to gain the consent and commitment to working with me on this project.

I will be pleased to discuss my ideas further with you both and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

With best wishes

Cindy Peek

## Appendix Five: Interview Set Up

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

Dear [REDACTED]

### Ref: Request for an Interview

I am writing to you to invite you to take part in my PhD research project. I am currently a Doctoral (PhD) student at the University of Birmingham. I am looking into the leadership of change, focusing on children's services in the context of three major areas of change within a global, national and local context. The aim is to study complex change management and to better understand the leadership that this requires. In light of this, I have a few questions that I would like to ask you to test the assumptions of my study. The interview should last no longer than one hour.

I have also included an information sheet on my PhD project that you may find helpful. Please note that it is my intention to make an audio record of the interview, and to make sure that you are comfortable with this.

I would like to emphasise the importance of this research to better understand the role of leadership in effecting change and how it can influence increasing positive outcomes for children and young people in a local authority area. The study not only addresses the importance of local factors affecting leadership of change, but also considers the wider national and global economic context and the implications of these on local policy formation in children's services. It is my hope, that the study would be a theoretical and empirical framework for understanding and developing more effective leadership of change to promote improved outcomes for children and young people in a local area..

Therefore, I would be very grateful if you will grant me an interview.

Yours sincerely

Cindy Peek

# UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

## Research Interview Consent Form

**Interviewer**                      **Cindy Peek**

**Interviewee**                      .....

**Date of interview**              .....

### **Purpose of interview**

This interview is part of my research for the award of a PhD at the University of Birmingham

### **Confidentiality**

Research ethics will be observed at all times in the analysis and use to which the data may be put. The data from the interview will only be available to my supervisor on my Doctorate programme at the University of Birmingham and, possibly, to the External Examiner for my thesis. Excerpts from the interview may be included as part of the final thesis, but your name will be excluded, and any identifying characteristics will be removed. The interview may also be used as part of written papers or books, but without your name and excluding any identifying characteristics, and subject to research ethics.

Acknowledgement: Please sign this form to show that we have agreed its content

**Signed (Interviewee)**              .....

**Signed (Interviewer)**              .....

**Date**                                      .....



## PhD Project Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a PhD research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

1. Research Project Title:

The Leadership of Change: Future building for children and young people

2. What is the project's purpose?

I am looking into how local and national government is impacting on, and can better respond to an increasingly complex area of change using [REDACTED] as a case study. The aim is to better understand the leadership of change in a complex environment of changing national policy and approaches alongside fiscal difficulties in a global, national and local economy.

3. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen for your unique knowledge of, and involvement in corporate leadership, policy formation and implementation.

4. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and you will be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

The research will take the form of a semi-structured interview lasting no more than one hour. I will ask a series of questions regarding your thinking, views, and interpretation of the role and effectiveness of the leadership of change in promoting local improvements in outcomes for children and young people. I may contact you following the interview for points of clarification.

6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that my thesis will provide a detailed and thorough analysis of the leadership of change in a complex environment which will contribute to better policy design and implementation in the future.

7. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect from you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

8. What will happen to the results of the PhD research project?

The information collected from you will primarily be used in my original research to inform my argument for my PhD thesis. I am hoping that I will finish and submit my thesis by September 2013. You are welcome to have a copy of my thesis on completion on my PhD.

I may in the future use the information collected for my PhD thesis to inform articles for academic journals or may choose to publish my PhD thesis.

9. Who is organising and funding the research?

I am funding the PhD course myself as part of my on-going continuing professional development and personal interest in the subject matter.

10. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

It is my intention to make an audio recording of our interview, as part of the requirement for my PhD is to produce written transcripts of the interviews. The transcription of the recordings of your interview made during this research will be primarily used for analysis and for illustration in my PhD thesis. In the future it may be used for other academic

purposes in conference presentations, lectures, journal articles, and publications. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one will be allowed access to the original recordings other than my PhD supervisors for research verification purposes.

#### 11. Contact for further information

*If you require any additional information please feel free to contact myself, or contact my principal PhD supervisor:*

*Finally ...*

If you are comfortable to participate in my PhD research project I will ask you to sign a consent form before the start of the interview.

*Thank you for taking the time to read through the information.*

## Appendix Six: FOI Request

### FOI Questions for DfE: 2 February 2012

1. I understand that there is now a merger between the Office of the School Commissioner and the School Improvement Directorate within the DfE. Could you please give me the following information:
  - a. What will be the name of this new Directorate?
  - b. How many staff will be employed in this area?
  - c. Is this an increase in the number of posts, over and above those employed in the original two Directorates prior to merger?
  - d. Do you use consultants to work with local authorities on developing academies?
  - e. How many of these do you use in the Directorate?
  - f. Are these consultants paid on a daily rate?
  - g. Do these consultants get any additional pay against performance, for example, per conversion of a school to an academy?
  - h. What is the total budget spending on consultants for this work?
2. I understand that the Department is looking for continued school improvement through the conversion of local authority maintained schools to Academy Trusts and that this improvement is achieved through all staff being employed by the Trust which then enables them to have robust sustainability for school improvement. Could you please give me the following information:
  - a. On the above concept, Grant Maintained (and later Foundation Schools), and Schools as Trusts arrangements (but not Academies), utilise sponsoring bodies and educational partners. However these are not seen to be robust sustainable school improvement vehicles. What is the difference between these arrangements and those within Academy Trusts?
  - b. How do you envisage the Academy Trust arrangements to ensure school improvement will be different to that of previous arrangements under Foundation Schools or School Trust arrangements?
  - c. How will the Department monitor and support continued improvement for Academy Trust Schools?
  - d. How and when will the Department intervene in Academy Trust Schools?
3. The Academy Trust Schools will receive their funding directly from the YPLA (the EFA after 1 April 2012), including an amount of funding which would normally be given to the local authority for the purposes of supporting schools and running its education authority (the LACSEG). Could you please give me the following information:
  - a. What is the minimum funding given to any Academy, which is taken from the local authority revenue budget?

- b. What is the maximum funding given to any academy, which is taken from the local authority revenue budget?
  - c. Is any funding per pupil given to an Academy, over and above that which they would have been allocated through the DSG managed by the local authority with their Schools Forum?
- 4. Additional funding is given to schools commencing the Academy conversion route initially for environmental improvements, but also for other reasons. Please could you give me the following information:
  - a. The reasons for all additional funding supplied to converting Academies and the amounts the Department spends on this, by budget headings and amounts please, for example, legal fees, compromise agreements etc.
  - b. What is the overall budget which has been allocated to spend on Academies conversions and what is the total spend to date? (this includes the revenue budgets for all Academies) – this relates to the financial year 2011/12
- 5. The DfE has expressed concerns about the levels of funding taken from the DSG to fund local authority services. Where there are Academy chains, what is the level of funding allowed by the DfE which the Academy Trust draws from their member schools in order to run the Academy chain? Please state lowest and highest amounts in percentage terms of overall budgets per school if possible.
- 6. About the changing role of the local authority. Please could you give me the following information.
  - a. Within the policy for promoting schools to become Academies – what do you see as the role of the local authority?
  - b. In regards to the current local authority role, they are expected to know their community schools in order to intervene and challenge appropriately. How will the DfE as a centralised body, undertake this function?
  - c. The Government expects more and more schools to convert to Academy status, what does the Government see as the future role for local authorities regarding education for their communities of children and young people?

When Academy conversion is referenced I refer to those schools that have chosen to convert to Academy status, through an expression of interest to the DfE, as well as those that are sponsored conversions where these schools are viewed as of concern in their standards of achievement or Ofsted category.

## Appendix Seven: Coding for Reflection and Personal Observations

No.	Reflective Analysis and Personal Observations of	Interview or meeting	Code link
ON1	Reflections	interview	A1 (relates to interview process)
ON2	Reflections	interview	A2 (relates to interview process)
ON3	Reflections	Interview	B1 (relates to interview process)
ON4	Reflections	Interview	B2 (relates to interview process)
ON5	Reflections	Interview	B3 (relates to interview process)
ON6	Reflections	Interview	B4 (relates to interview process)
ON7	Reflections	Interview	B5 (relates to interview process)
ON8	Reflections	Interview	B6 (relates to interview process)
ON9	Reflections	Interview	B7 (relates to interview process)
ON10	Reflections	Interview	B8 (relates to interview process)
ON11	Reflections	interview	C1 (relates to interview process)

			process)
ON12	Reflections	interview	C2 (relates to interview process)
ON13	Reflections	Interview	C3 (relates to interview process)
ON14	Reflections	Interview	C4 (relates to interview process)
ON15	Reflections	Interview	C5 (relates to interview process)
ON16	Reflections	Interview	C6 (relates to interview process)
ON17	Reflections	Interview	C7 (relates to interview process)
ON18	Reflections	Interview	C8 (relates to interview process)
ON19	Reflections	Interview	C9 (relates to interview process)
ON20	Senior leadership meeting of strategic support  (November 2012)	Reflection and Discourse	(relates to C5) communication and leadership style
ON21	Leadership of potential conflict in community  (2012 notes held in data)	DMT meeting	Relates to problem solving and communication/support of others

ON22	Road show led by senior leadership with staff  (19 September 2010)	Open forum	Relates to communication and sharing the vision
ON23	Senior leadership between themselves  (October 2011)	Corporate Management Team Meeting	Relates to communication within the senior team



## Appendix Eight: Coding Grid for Written Documents

Type of document	Coding
Minutes of meeting s CMT March 2010	D1
Minutes of meetings CMT April 2010	D2
Minutes of meetings CMT May 2010	D3
Minutes of meetings CMT June 2010	D4
Minutes of meetings CMT July 2010	D5
Minutes of meetings CMT August 2010	D6
Minutes of meetings CMT September 2010	D7
Minutes of meetings CMT October 2010	D8
Minutes of meetings CMT November 2010	D9
Minutes of meetings CMT December 2010	D10
Minutes of meetings CMT January 2011	D11
Minutes of meetings CMT February 2011	D12
Minutes of meetings CMT March 2011	D13
Minutes of meetings CMT April 2011	D14
Minutes of meetings CMT May 2011	D15
Minutes of meetings CMT June 2011	D16
Minutes of meetings CMT July 2011	D17
Minutes of meetings CMT August 2011	D18

Minutes of meetings CMT September 2011	D19
Minutes of meetings CMT October 2011	D20
Minutes of meetings CMT November 2011	D21
Minutes of meetings CMT December 2011	D22
Minutes of meetings CMT January 2012	D23
Minutes of meetings CMT February 2012	D24
Minutes of meetings CMT March 2012	D25
Minutes of meetings CMT April 2012	D26
Minutes of meetings CMT May 2012	D27
Minutes of meetings CMT June 2012	D28
Minutes of meetings CMT July 2012	D29
Minutes of meetings CMT August 2012	D30
Minutes of meetings CMT September 2012	D31
Minutes of meetings CMT October 2012	D32
Minutes of meetings CMT November 2012	D33
Minutes of meetings CMT December 2012	D34
Minutes of meetings CMT January 2013	D35
Minutes of meetings CMT February 2013	D36
Minutes of meetings CMT March 2013	D37
Minutes of meetings CMT April 2013	D38

Minutes of meetings CMT May 2013	D39
Minutes of meetings CMT June 2013	D40
Minutes of meetings CMT July 2013	D41
SLT Meetings 2010	D42
SLT Meetings 2011	D43
SLT Meetings 2012	D44
SLT Meetings 2013	D45
Headteacher Engagement Meetings 2011	D46
Headteacher Engagement Meetings 2012	D47
Headteacher Engagement Meetings 2013	D48
Changing Our Council – Programme Business Case	D49
Changing Our Council – Customer and Citizen Services	D50
Changing Our Council – Strategic Support	D51
Changing Our Council – Transactional Support Services	D52
Changing Our Council – Delivery	D53
Changing Our Council – Management Structures	D54
Changing Our Council – Commissioning and Procurement	D55
Changing Our Council – Governance	D56

Changing Our Council – Review Papers 2011	D57
Changing Our Council – Closure Report February 2013	D58
Letter from Michael Gove to DCS' – 26 May 2010	D59
SOLACE – Call to Action: Filling the Gap: the Championing Role of English Councils in Education	D60
Speech by the Chief Inspector for Ofsted to the ADCS Conference in July 2013	D61
Freedom of Information response from the Department for Education	D62
Notes of meetings for Academy conversions (LA) – 2011/12/13	D63
Conference Workshop notes on Mutualisation of local authority services held by the Prime Minister's Office – December 2012	D64
Education Meetings 2011 (notes)	D65
Education Meetings 2012 (notes)	D66
Education Meetings 2013 (notes)	D67
Ofsted Report June 2013	D68

## Appendix Nine: Example of Temporary Construct Grid

Temporary Concepts	Page no.	Notes and observations
talk now in a position of hindsight having gone through change since the day I walked through this door.	2	Involved in change since 2008, not in relation to budget savings to the extent of what has happened since 2010
I think that's the most important piece of context actually because when I came toward the council the changes I wanted to instigate was delivery of regeneration, delivery of the city based upon a model not everybody had in mind I thought would progress.	2	Joined the council to put in place a model that he wanted to progress
2006 I'd just finished studying economics under the business floor and their projections were at that stage were that the collapse was coming	2	Again reference to academia and developing models
So I think that context is really important on the basis of how change then occurred, because the	3	Reacting to the need to change because of the economic downturn and not being proactive about that

change is reactionary and has to be to a situation of reduced budget capability.		
change in political direction or a change in, there wasn't a new manifesto for delivery or a new manifesto for life or a view of where it needs to go so all of those deeper issues are still very relevant within the country but have not necessarily been picked up by national change.	3	Reflection of change of government and changed policy direction but not change in relation to the deeper issues (economic)
National change has been about throwing you know, a kitchen sink and everything you can at it, it's about making sure we don't sink into a depression	3	Focus on recovery of economy in direct contrast to previous point?
really interesting point in terms of what is the purpose of change.	3	Naval gazing?
back towards the locality and the operational structure of the organisation and say right we've got the management team, the	3	Bringing that national scene to LA working as a leadership/management team with the how and why of that change

leadership team, we're now faced with these reductions, because we know we're doing it, but then how are you then going to do it is another big issue and why are we then doing it even is another big issue.		
the issue often is capability.	3	Put all of that to one side it will come down to capability for change to happen
change model crisis was upon us so the first step for crisis change was there,	3	Managing change as a crisis not as a planned programme
quite interesting that we're still here	3	Looking at change still in crisis
there's an urgency about it and we went at it quite quickly and that's given the organisation some level of confidence.	4	Urgency to deal with it and did it quite quickly which gave confidence (for future?)
If you break it down into the start of change, the model was introduced and the model was introduced by KPMG and PWC, there's two waves.	4	Two different consultants PWC first and then used KPMG as didn't believe that PWC model would realise the savings required.

Previously to that I identified to that were two areas of change in this department. The first area of change is the fact that I wanted to shift the culture of how we worked because the department has pulled together from many other smaller departments and it never existed in this right so there was the previous department: design, planning, place or something of that nature and there was the department of development, housing – either way they, I think there was probably about, it feels like there was probably 14 Assistant Directors and we now have 4. A massive shift in terms of scale.	4	Change programme instigated by interviewee prior to any requirement to change due to budget reductions.
I'd started a programme called Rethinking Regeneration and there's a bit how the department had a rethink about what was good and it was	4	Their own ambition to test out their model for urban regeneration in a city



actively becoming one of the best regeneration departments in this country albeit we started in 2008 and we went fantastically well as we controlled it,		
we managed it, we reshaped all the teams, we reshaped all the culture, we reshaped all the ambition, we changed the nature of staying in relationships, we took money out, it was fantastically, brilliantly healthy, the place was buoyant with ambition, buoyant with energy and full of self-directional based leadership.	4	The achievements they succeeded to put into place in a balanced budget with external funding flowing through from government for targeted projects – pre newcoalition government
People were actually really clear about what they could do, they were unleashed, you know they were absolutely autonomous, they kind of knew where they had to go but they really felt they had ownership.	4	Role clarity gave them freedom and responsibility with ownership and their own ambition

actually the corporate change programme was really a decision made that all of the change programmes had to stop.	5	Their own change programme was usurped by the corporate change programme – did not like that
really big shift actually because what that did was it put a brake on change,	5	Articulated as the end of change for them
people thought well we're only going to do change the corporate way and we all do it the same way and we all have to get ready and we all have to do it the same way, we all have to march in the right direction	5	Working corporately was very difficult for them and seen as a negative
localised innovation I think came became a little bit frustrating, because people couldn't become entrepreneurial in some respects.	5	Stopped innovation and change – change not good
I don't think that was the intention but I think it was the outcome because structure had to be given	5	Unintentional outcome by giving structure to the change. But their previous change programme had structure even though it was a different structure, because they owned and controlled it did not feel restrictive

two consultants that came in, in order to get us to their positions they took a greater position in their view of the scale of budget, and in their opinion of their view of operational structures	5	Both overstated the savings to be made and the changes to be made to structures
They made big assumptions, those big assumptions then pushed you down a direction of change.	5	Big assumptions were made because they didn't know the business, but how could they if this interviewee was not engaging with them because of the way they wished to 'organise' (not control)
they could never understand the business the way we who ran it could understand it.	5	Did not feel engaged in, being done to, not doing with
What was left out of that was the fact that actually it was the top team change and would bring the organisation which is huge, massive job, with the organisation of the change as well with the top team doing it.	5	The consultants didn't consider the top team change management as it was the top team that would deliver this – interesting as they were part of the top team, and yet resisted the change – down to not agreeing with it?
The biggest memory I have of that change programme was the frustration with the second wave of consultants,	5	Had really big problems with the consultant's approach to the review and did not feel that they could engage with it

which was KPMG. The frustration I had with them was the fact that I thought they treated me with disregard in terms of my requests for information.		
a really interesting point because what I constantly said to them was "you're taking me on this path but I don't work that way, I want to see where I'm going before I go on that path so that then I can actually challenge it" but what they did was they presented information every week and every week I would say "well can you tell me what's happening next week?" – No. "Can you send me the information beforehand?" – No. "So you're not going to send me information so I can't read it so I have to react in a 1 hour or 2 hour meeting?" – It really disengaged me, I work in a very different way, I work in a very ordered manner,	5/6	Had a totally different way of wanting to deal with information and felt bounced into responding and therefore was not taken along within the change process from the very beginning

not controlled but ordered and I order my time and I order my presence and everything I do is very well considered		
I thought there was a bit of manipulation there.	6	Although professing to want to work in an ordered way and not a controlling way, felt manipulated to go on the 'journey of change'
there was frustration and my frustration showed through all those workshops and the Chief Exec was frustrated because I was seen as not to go along with that and the culture. There was a real cultural clash there. It wasn't understood.	6	Their resistance was noticed, but not dealt with and they saw the process as a real cultural clash in terms of their personal culture, not organisational culture
In hindsight maybe you had to push that hard, maybe it had to be done but the key elements of that change programme were reform in terms of management layering were reform in relations to the procurement, were reform in relation to the back office, were reform in relation to the strategy. Now any change	6/7	Acknowledgement that the areas needed to be looked at, so the consultants were right in the context of their review

programme along the lines of any budget reduction would look at those four areas.		
The areas it didn't manage to tackle were the biggest issues of cultural change you know, where our leadership was in terms of the leadership of place, where our leadership was in terms of sustainability all what was called the enablers, the things that actually brought it close to the localised place, a place that was right,	7	The change model did include the enablers referred to here, yet these still haven't been addressed in the change process
their generic model became particularised to our locality but yet we've yet to deliver the particularisation and that's a big issue because that comes back to the other issue of context and why we're here in the first place,	7	Their model was developed for our locality, but it has not delivered to our needs because the context was not considered.
the conservative government was based on business growth and was also based on the big	7	Felt that there was no recognition of this context in the consultants' review

society. Big society has always been present in the north of England tremendously present in areas of less wealth because it has to be.		
Business growth is not going to occur at the same rate in terms of jobs in a recession and investment isn't going into it	7	Refers to this as a Keynesian, which is one they believe in and you need to enable that growth to happen through increasing government intervention through increased spending and reducing interest rates opposite to current government view
So that policy hasn't really worked so that context is still there and the issues of Britain and its problems are still there and so the successes are there but the underlying problems are still there.	7	Referring to lack of success in policy of Government as big society will not regenerate the economy
In the context of change we've changed as an organisation for the better to deliver better, more efficient services I'm delighted we've done that, I think that's good, I think that's healthy	7	Acknowledgement that the change process has worked even though they did not engage in it or believe in it
in hindsight I would rather the start of the process of change was done in a	7	Felt that the process was not transparent and the change has not embedded, nor did everyone commit to it, but from other's

more open and transparent way with more maturity and less doggedness I think that would have been, it would have embedded more quickly and been more hands to the pump.		comments, it would appear that this interviewee was the one who did not engage in it, yet as a senior leader in the council I would have expected them to have been able to make sure that these things happened.
I would have also liked us to have left the departments where they are now actually not creating delivery in different ways. I would like that to happen because they know their business they know their business much better and they understand it.	7/8	One of the enablers of changing our council was 'delivery' but nothing was done with this and it was left to departments, so it appears to be a blockage of their own making
There was lots of communication	8	Acknowledgement of good practice, and yet
actually it is so difficult when you have such a personal position, that actually I don't know if we can ever get that right and it was well communicated, the first phase but there's always going to be problems and I don't know if anybody actually on the	8	A valid point in that there was an unprecedented amount of savings to be made, but others had been involved in setting up departments and organisations, but it is more difficult to change and retain rather than start from scratch



corporate management team had ever gone through that level of change before, I don't think anybody had.		
The work streams themselves, well they're absolutely fine some of them are ridiculously long to get going, you know, needlessly. I think there were hubs on top of that to try and mobilise, transactional, strategic for all sorts of reasons and they took a lot of time, so because of the length of time savings weren't made, and indeed changes weren't made and the savings then fell onto the departments to make.	8	Yet, the non-engagement and resistance to the work streams and what they were trying to achieve came through from other sources of evidence. And when savings were made, of course they had to come from Departments, this is where the budgets are, not in strategic support and transactional
Where the organisation now is in relation to change I don't think that the staff want to hear the word anymore.	8	Change burnout?
we've tried to think about it in different ways and try	8/9	Again trying rather than succeeding

and maintain it in terms of positivity		
I think the officer part of council has changed I'm not sure the politics or the position has changed as well. I think the political position they understand that we need to reduce our budget but I don't know if they actually really understand that things change delivery in a different way or shape in a different way, commissioning in a different way or help in a different way, and something that I've never used externally or anywhere else is that there is a shift to go from a paternal role to the fraternal role and how we actually enable to sit alongside people in which we need to support and the businesses that we need to support is a key function.	9	Discusses that the officer group has changed the organisation, but has not enabled the politicians to understand those differences – particularly the need to shift from paternalistic approach to fraternal role for the council – not using influencing skills or communicating fully with elected members

There is a confusion as to whether we are in charge as a Council of everything or actually are we just one of the players and clearly we're just in my opinion we're just one of the players.	9	And yet from other observations this interviewee does believe in LA control of partnership working, does not consider themselves as 'one of the players' but as THE player
that tension doesn't often lead to, you know when you look at the managerial and political leadership or senior leadership position doesn't often lead enough to clarity.	9	I think that this relates to their own clarity or lack thereof about their role in this change process where partnership working is concerned
where we are now is a leaner organisation.	9	Reduced the size of the organisation with less officers in place
Are we an organisation more capable? Well, not an awful lot has stopped – we're still doing virtually everything that we ever did before I can't really see huge changes to it. We don't have certain teams anymore, we still do what they used to do. So the organisation is stretched, there is no doubt about it. The organisation is very stretched, there's a huge	9	Believes that we continue to do what we always did by sharing out more work between officers/staff who are left in the council, yet I sense no ownership of this result

amount of good will in the staff.		
In my whole life I'll look back on this and peoples personal resolve and I will remember it with immense pride actually of what people stood up and did in the face of tremendous adversity, Nobody had ever stopped doing what they should do, no-one had ever kicked back and said no I'm not doing that, in all my time here and I don't know anybody in this department, any manager that has feedback we've had upset people, we've had people who have been displaced, we've had upset representatives, industrial relations all that	9/10	Recognition of what people have done to achieve savings and continue to deliver services – determination within the process from all involved
we've worked through it with a great level of leadership and resolve but people are actually tired, people are really tired but you know there hasn't been a respite in relation to all this over the last	10	Yet that leadership in terms of solutions apart from taking money from the system is not evident in what they are describing and they obviously were not prepared for the emotional drain on themselves, let alone able to prepare others for it

three years, preparing people for that level of emotional energy just isn't possible.		
The other key thing I think is the fact that I need to be sure or the staff need to be sure that when change occurs that change occurs with equity and organisational change without equity means a lot different	10	This is something they are really worried about, but the reference to equity is not about equal opportunities type of equity but is in relation to having the savings distributed equally across all departments, there is a fear here that other areas are protected because of priorities, particularly safeguarding, which relates to children's as well as adult's services
there will be a feeling that needs to be understood for delivery to continue and It's also important for people to feel and understand the level of that delivery	10	There is a whole fear of change linked to their own sense of well-being and not being in control to stop the decimation of services that they are responsible for.
the maturity to understand the benefits of that,	10	The difficulties, personal ones, of seeing all that they have joined the organisation to achieve and to prove, going away from them and they can do nothing to stop that.
there is no benchmark on how well the council is doing, but nobody knows that so people doubt it and they are wanting to	10	How to measure if what has been done is successful, but as a senior leader, should they not be thinking about this

review.		
we have no way of measuring if change is a very good thing. You can measure the money and you can measure the people, you can measure the pound shillings and pence – an activity for the outcome is the matter of another issue and that's harder to tell.	10	I think that this is because the outcomes being measured are not what they would want to measure, not their 'baby' as it were
, on the leadership of change what I have tried to do is get everybody to lead on that change and nobody to chicken out on anything, to face up and to be really strong and supportive of positive change.	11	But in their heart they don't believe that this is positive change, not for their section anyway
it is awful for these colleagues, it's awful to reduce our people when you're actually trying to service people's requirements, what you're actually trying to ensure is to keep as positive as possible and that's actually quite difficult	11	Heartfelt response, I thought that they were flippant and arrogant in interview, perhaps they are also lost and hurting and don't know what to do to 'save' their work

because they think that you're not being honest you know what are you trying to do, can't we just drop it, you know, well anyway.		
In terms of trying to ensure that we get a change that leads to improved outcomes I don't think that's sure in all aspects is it? Because if you take an organisation like mine with £28m worth of LEGI funding. If the funding doesn't work we wouldn't have anything. The government wouldn't spend money so investment must achieve some level of return. So the investment isn't there so that investment is down to enterprise zones, that investment and learning it's not there.	11	Additional external funding which was stopped by the new government as they are wanting to deliver this through new City Region set up and Local Enterprise Partnerships
Do people, were we touching enough of lives to make a big difference, well I think we were	12	Their belief in their own success prior to the change programme and the need to reduce budgets

actually, well I think we were otherwise it wasn't used properly. Are we now curtailed in what we can do? Yes without external investment we are. The department is heavily externally invested in and that was a big issue in economic development.		
Are other people able to deliver? Will they go back to the first context and say what did Northern Rock really mean? They're not able to deliver, the capital finance isn't there, and they can't deliver. And interestingly the issue about the scale of money, the scale of money in the system should be proportionate to the scale of supply, we push money into it because people are concerned.	12	This is a heart felt opinion and one where the arrogance comes through again, they are the only one who are right and the only one who can achieve in this arena, but not if resources are removed from the system
We're left now with an issue of rising youth unemployment, some bigger underlying issues and if I ask the question are we capable of	12	Rising youth unemployment has been directly connected to loss of resources in the Council, and not about less jobs around, no other way to deal with, and yet youth unemployment pre 19 has reduced to lowest levels they have ever been in the district and



continuing to deliver – well we've lost resources, we've less human resource and we've lost people resources so something has to give, work towards that situation. I think welfare reform is going to put more pressure in and you know there'll be a bigger ask and that's an issue, because at the end of the day who do people turn to and that's an issue and there are lots of issues		the LA is looking at ways to remove the age 19 cliff edge.
The issue for us in relation to change we are a trading organisation, we are a business in our own right and whether that's internally traded which is a large percentage of our work or a large percentage of external traded and we're living in the recession we're living in now.	12	If the department they are responsible for is a trading department, how has the reduction in resources hit so hard, there is conflict in the thinking and tensions in the understanding
Are we managing with less managers – yes and I	13	Yet there is no suggestion about how to do this with reducing resources

think that's absolutely a positive issue. Can we pretend to manage with less managers as we grow our interest in certain subjects – no actually I think it might be time to invest again into some skills.		
I think the leadership now is absolutely crucial, because we have done everything we can to lead, to create a level of clarity and create a lean organisation in order to continue to have a role in delivery.	13	On broad leadership through CMT as a team
The next change is policy, big policy because national government has changed their policy and we've absorbed that policy by changing how we deliver and how we cost our delivery in management terms, a cost delivery situation.	13	This is in relation to changed policy on regeneration as government policy not on the reduced resources to deliver

